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PARIS REVIEW

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Cover photograph by Harold Feinstein

Contributors

SAMUEL BECKETT was born in Dublin, but he now lives in Paris and writes in French, although his earlier work was written in English. "Dante and the Lobster" first appeared in Edward Titus' *This Quarter* in 1930; and *Echo's Bones* was published by George Reavey's Europa Press in 1932. WARREN "BABY" DODDS, outstanding exponent of New Orleans drumming, has played, during his long career, with such jazz greats as his brother, Johnny Dodds, King Oliver, Bunk Johnson, Jelly Roll Morton, and Sidney Bechet. HAROLD FEINSTEIN'S photographs have been shown and published in Europe and America, and he is represented in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art. LARRY GARA is Assistant Professor of History at Eureka College, in Illinois. His life of Cyrus Woodman, *Westernized Yankee*, was recently published by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. MICHAEL HAMBURGER, poet and critic, holds the post of Lecturer in German at Reading University. His essay on Büchner is from his *Reason and Energy: Studies in Modern German Literature*, which Grove Press will publish in the fall of 1957. HENRI MICHAUX, poet and painter, was born in Belgium in 1899, and has lived most of his life in Paris. *Miserable Miracle* is his most recent book. JAMES PURDY says of himself: "I am 33, was born in Ohio, and attended the University of Chicago and universities in Mexico. At present I am writing a novel and have begun work on a play." JEAN-PAUL SARTRE, leader of the Existentialist school of philosophy, was born in Paris in 1905. He has written plays, novels, critical studies, and important philosophical works. He is the editor of the review, *Les Temps Modernes*. MARK SCHORER, critic and novelist, has been working on a book about D. H. Lawrence for several years. He is Professor of English at the University of California, Berkeley. LOUISE VARESE, the translator of Michaux's *Miserable Miracle*, is best known for her translations of Baudelaire, Rimbaud, St.-John Perse, and Valéry. She is the wife of Edgar Varèse, the composer.

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE: After Budapest

[*Jean-Paul Sartre's leading position amongst French intellectuals lends a special significance to his reactions to Russian intervention in Hungary and to his analysis of the present situation in leftwing politics in France today. The following interview with Sartre was first published in the Paris* Express, *November 9, 1956.*]

How did you learn of the events in Hungary and what were your first reactions?

My first reaction, anguish; there was this unbelievable error: the request for intervention by Russian troops, and no one knew as yet whether it was the last Rakosi-ist or the new Hungarian government which was responsible. After a few days, anguish gave way to hope and even joy; although the Russian command—which we had just learned was called in by Gero—had committed the criminal clumsiness of answering this call, it had then withdrawn its troops from Budapest.

We saw Soviet regiments withdrawing before the insurgents rather than fire on them; Russian soldiers deserting. The Kremlin seemed hesitant: it seemed as if the insurgents were going to win. Perhaps, in spite of this first terrible bloodshed, the Soviet Union wanted to resort to negotiations like those in Poland.

The anguish returned immediately after, more intense each day: it did not leave me with the emergence from prison on to the world scene of Cardinal Mindszenty. I thought: the USSR will be put on the spot: their Cardinal was returned to them; what about Horthy and integration with the Western

powers? The Russians will have to abandon Hungary or resume the massacres. The neutrality asked for by Nagy was obviously only a minimum demand made under pressure of the insurgents and which would not satisfy them.

The return to the old parties, the hunt for members of the secret police and, undoubtedly, also of the Communist party workers, the return of the émigrés, the appearance of "suppressed local émigrés," the possible existence of a reactionary conspiracy in the army, all this showed that the Hungarian revolt was aiming at a complete liquidation of what is called the socialist foundations of the regime.

It was this tragic situation which one of the last members of the Nagy government described on Radio Budapest: "We are caught between the menace of a return of the reactionaries and that of a foreign occupation. This is what caused the Russian intervention. This is the explanation." But an explanation is not an excuse: from any angle, the intervention was a crime. And it is an abject lie to claim that the workers are fighting at the side of the Soviet troops.

Listen rather to the appeals of Kadar, last night: "Workers, help us! . . . Workers and peasants, fight with us! The Communist party is going through the most tragic phase of its history. We are breaking with the past; moreover, we have changed the name of the party." Would these appeals be necessary if everyone was supporting the insurgents? If the workers and the peasants, after having "manifested their legitimate discontent," to quote *Pravda,* had joined with the Nagy government to push back the émigrés, there probably would have been a civil war; however, not one dispatch, not one radio report, even in the popular democracies, made mention of a civil war. All is confusion and instability among the insurgent groups popping up everywhere.

Among these groups, united in their fight against the Soviets and in their demand for withdrawal, appeared reactionary elements and some which were foreign inspired. But the

fact is there: workers, peasants, the entire populace fought at their side. The advanced Communist element, moved by the wish to democratize the regime, coexisted with the reactionaries in the same groups which contained, at the same time, many other tendencies and which seesawed from one side to the other in reaction to events, to changes in membership of the groups and, finally, to the Russian intervention.

In a word, it was on the entire population and not on a handful of armed émigrés that the Red Army was going to fire. It is the people, the workers and the peasants—the former victims of Horthy—who are still being massacred today.

The crime, for me, is not *only* the attack on Budapest by the tanks, it is that it was made possible and perhaps necessary (from the Soviet point of view naturally) by twelve years of terror and stupidity. If the right was predominant among most of the insurgents it is because they all shared one passion, completely negative: hatred of the Soviets and of Rakosi-ism.

Those hunts in the sewers were horrible: as though it was necessary for the regime to make itself hated! Aside from a conscious minority—the intellectuals, the union of writers—quickly ignored by the masses, the workers and the peasants, after having recited their lessons learned by rote, found themselves in complete confusion, with no political or social education.

Generally, popular revolutions are leftist. For the first time —though everything is new in these tragic events—we have seen a political revolution evolving to the right. Why? Because nothing had been given to the people, neither material satisfaction nor a socialist faith, not even a clear viewpoint of the situation. The people were certainly mistaken, but even in their errors they have the right to liberty and respect: workers free themselves by means of errors, of experiments; errors are not corrected by cannon fire. Stalinism is *entirely* responsible for these very errors.

The right claims that the Hungarian agony constitutes a definite defeat for socialism. What do you think?

What the Hungarian people are teaching us with their blood is the complete failure of socialism as a Soviet-imported product. We know what socialism has cost the Soviet Union: the sweat, the blood, the crimes, also the courage, and the perseverance. But the country was also able to raise itself to the top rank of industrial powers. That is because historical conditions allowed it; the Communists of 1917 were taking over from a bourgeoisie which was not yet fully developed, but which had laid the foundations of a strong industrial complex.

It was absolutely absurd to impose a servile imitation of the Stalin type of organization on each satellite country in order to make it a USSR plaything, a small-scale model, without taking into account the difference in situations. Hungary, in particular, was as far removed as possible from a socialist revolution by reason of its overpopulation, mostly peasants, and governed before the war by a class of feudal landowners and a cowardly and resigned bourgeosie which preferred a sort of semicolonization to its own development.

In 1939, the cities were unhappy under Horthy's dictatorship, but the peasants got along in spite of their misery; a practically nonexistent proletariat, a peasant class crushed under centuries-old prejudices: that is what the Soviets were confronted with in 1945. The first elections brought a democratic front to power in which the Communists, all-powerful behind the scenes, officially occupied but a limited place: 57% of the votes had gone to the party of small landowners.

The formidable task of the new government was to forge ahead, parcel out the large landholdings, distribute the land to the peasants, but then to form a new concentration both bourgeois and socialist (cooperative farms, factories, population centers, by attracting the surplus of the peasant

population to the cities). That is, to make these great changes *in place of* a bourgeoisie which had never known how to accept its responsibilities and *in favor of* socialism. Everything in this program went against the centuries-old habits of the peasants; as for the workers, they came from the country and they have remained more faithful to their villages than to the factories.

Nothing could be done without acceptance of a definite unpopularity and without exercising a certain restraint; it was necessary to feed these enlarged cities, this population of workers growing daily, and the peasants, less numerous and still badly equipped with tools, could only subsist by accepting taxes and a kind of collectivism.

This restraint has always existed in capitalist countries: only, the concentration and the various forms of expropriation which result from it seem to the individual to be the consequences of an anonymous destiny. In a socialist country this destiny often takes the form and name of the head of the government.

It was thus of *primary* importance that this restraint be as little irritating as possible, that the plans should be modest, and that progress towards socialism should proceed in stages over a long period; it was necesary to envisage an immediate rise in living standards so that everyone in the regime should have something to defend. Remember that it was the sale of the national wealth which was the strong point of our revolution. And besides, especially at this stage of evolution, the important thing was to convince. The Chinese say: "It is always necessary to explain." "Explain" does not mean propaganda. It is to inform, to educate, and also—for one does not convince with words only—to give something. Of those who are already persuaded that socialism is what their country needs, sacrifices can be asked But of those who, like the majority of Hungarian peasants, are both against the foreign occupation and socialism, nothing can be asked: it is first necessary

to conquer them, and to convince them. To demand from them the same thing as from those who already believe in socialism, is to create an ever increasing breach in the masses, to facilitate the growth of terrorism, to manufacture for oneself all the conditions necesary for a counterrevolution.

Nothing was explained: a series of events changed everything. First, the Marshall Plan; its avowed aim was to prevent the growth of socialism in the satellites: America's responsibility is undeniable in the present happenings. There followed, at the time, a sudden tightening of the ties between socialist countries: the "Iron Curtain" is a result of the Marshall Plan. Then came the first revolt of national communism: Titoism.

Everything moved towards stalinization: after the Marshall Plan the social-democratic party and the small landowners' party disappeared; after Titoism, the Communist party became bolshevized; that is, the nationalist elements which, as though by chance, were the only popular ones, were eliminated and replaced by Moscow-trained Communists. One can imagine the effect in Hungary of the Rajk trial (Rajk had fought alongside the peasants during the resistance) and the triumph of Rakosi (who had spent many years in the USSR).

Naturally, this transformation had two important economic consequences: the USSR, in turn, assumed the semi-colonization of Hungary, and overindustrialization pushed collectivity to an extreme. Hungary, more than any other Central European country, resisted this regime by force. All observers—even the French Communists—are agreed on this point. Terrorism was necessary to maintain it. The White Terror which, with certain people, seemed to justify the recent Russian intervention, is but the consequence of the *Red* Terror.

The error is evident: the USSR had succeeded with the "socialization of one country"—its own; it was a matter of succeeding with the "socialization of several countries." It

had preferred to reissue several "socialisms in one country." This façade allowed it to remain the only means of communication between one satellite and another, thus rejecting the self-imposed solution—a socialist commonwealth with interlocking economies—because of distrust and because it wanted interlocking economies only with its own country. The result: the total liquidation of a regime which was never accepted by anyone in Hungary.

There are some who say: "the foundations of socialism" should have been saved in Hungary. If the foundations of socialism had existed in Hungary, socialism would have saved itself. The Red Army intervened in Hungary to save the foundations of socialism in the USSR—that is, the military positions (as Courtade admits) and the uranium mines.

You spoke of "democratization." Will you define exactly what it means to you in a socialist regime?

For me, democratization is something which cannot exist without a complete revision of the relations between the Soviet Union and its satellites.

This democratization can only be realized in an organization of satellite countries conceived in the light of their own interests more than those of the USSR. Consequently, it requires a veritable general planning at the level of all the countries combined. It would then be evident that it is not necessary for Poland to manufacture cars which cannot run, that Budapest does not need a flooded subway system, that Polish coal could be distributed more efficiently among the various Central European countries. This union of all socialist countries would be directed by the USSR; but this directorship would only be truly administered under a common foreign policy. Then, a rise in the living standards would become possible, and with it, democratization could take on concrete forms.

When the living standards are raised, you can tell the truth

with no fear of trouble and even allow its expression by people not of your opinion. One lies to men who are dying of hunger and fatigue because, to them, governmental errors are a question of life and death. Democratization, for me, does not mean a return to a plurality of parties: the reappearance in Hungary of conservative parties almost made necessary the Russian presence (but not the brutal intervention). But one can return to a centralized democratization within the party; individual liberty can be restored, the right of habeas corpus; censorship can be abolished, and workers' councils can be set up. In a word, it is up to each government to decide, taking into account the situation and the demand of the masses. But most important, for me, democratization will begin when those abstract parties named Communist party of Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, etc., will have truly resumed—if it is not too late—contact with the masses.

Do you think that Stalinism is primarily concerned with foreign policy?

I am not sure. It seems to me that in the beginning the USSR, moreover legitimately, did not distinguish between foreign policy and the organization of socialism. From 1945 to 1948, she would have liked to attract the popular republics by a slow rise in living standards, by a progressive construction of socialist foundations, which, at the same time, gave her security and defended her against encirclement.

It was the Marshall Plan, once again, which provoked the fear of a rupture in the socialist front. In any case, I fear that it was not a question of military security which provoked Russian intervention in Hungary. Anyway, that is the opinion of Pierre Courtade who makes these "revelations" in *Humanité:*

> Was there any need for hoping for the re-establishment, in the name of "liberty," of a feudal regime in Hungary?
>
> Could the Soviet Union, whose forces were stationed in Hungary by

treaty agreement, run the risk of a "break in alliances" which would have made of Hungary a stronghold of the Western powers in the middle of the popular democracies?

What attitude can men like yourself, who were its friends, now have towards the USSR?

I will say first that a crime does not involve an entire people. I do not think that the Russian people ever had much sympathy towards the Hungarians, any more than the Hungarians for the Russians. Moreover, there are very few Russians who know much about current events. For this it would be necessary to read the Hungarian and Polish press, if they are still distributed in Moscow. What happened in Hungary is thus, in my opinion, of little import to the Russian people, nor does it touch their lives very deeply. Especially because they are consciously being lied to. *Pravda* was writing last Sunday, a few hours after the Soviet aggression against Budapest: "The Hungarian people, its working class, all the true patriots of Hungary will find in themselves the necessary force with which to destroy reaction." There, certainly, is what the readers of the Soviet press believe. You know of course that the troops intervening in Hungary are of various non-Russian races: there is no chance that workers from Moscow will come back to say to their friends: we have fired on workers.

No, the Russian people is innocent, as are all peoples, except those who are involved through their silence in a system of concentration camps established in their own countries. In the USSR, the stupor of the population since the return of the prisoners proves that it was not aware. My personal sympathy for this great working and courageous people is not altered by the crimes of its government.

I was reading in *Combat* this morning: "Always full of discretion, Raymond Aron did not want to take the satisfaction which comes when one sees what he has written confirmed by recent events." Well! if Raymond Aron is satisfied

to see his predictions confirmed by events, he must have a strong constitution!

Undoubtedly he thinks, and certain others with him, that destalinization was a mask, nothing but words. For my part, I think that that is an absolute error. Destalinization was believed in by certain members of the Soviet government and its bureaucracy and it led them to taking a risk. Possibly some of them are already paying for this audacity? It was nevertheless to be desired, it was necessary, and I should like to express my personal gratitude and respect to those who first attempted it.

But it was necessary to know where they were heading and not to allow events to bypass them; they shouldn't have played this stupid game which the sinister Hermann calls in *Libération "la douche écossaise"* (the cold-water shock); they shouldn't have, in Hungary for example, called Nagy to power in 1953, promising higher investments in basic industries, then retracted, bringing back Rakosi after having criticized him, returning to the policy of the unconditional primacy of heavy industry, rehabilitating Rajk while allowing his accuser to remain in power, then suddenly firing Rakosi, the accuser, and replacing him with a greater mediocrity, Gero, and ending by calling in Nagy too late, when the blood was flowing, and taking away all his chances to regain the confidence of the people.

Yes, it was necessary to know what they wanted and where they were going; to make reforms without boasting about them first, but to make them progressively. From this point of view, the gravest fault was probably Khruschev's report, for in my opinion the solemn public denunciation, with a detailed list of crimes of an enshrined personality who represented the regime for so long, is madness when such frankness is not accompanied by a considerable rise in the living standards of the population.

Malenkov had been much more skillful. He had started to

inaugurate reforms without saying anything about Stalin. For example, it was he who had already replaced Rakosi with Nagy.

I do not consider Stalin to have been a cultured or extremely intelligent person. But from that to the story that he directed all of the operations of the war by following the movements of the armies on a school map, there is a considerable distance. Even Hitler was able to read a headquarters map. Thus, the Khruschev report, instead of being a frank and complete explanation, was nothing but a web of tales. This report was a terrible blow. It confirmed the dictatorship of the party instead of reducing it.

I know very well that it was not written with full deliberation, that it was an improvisation, that it was probably the maneuvering of the group which wanted to push democratization ahead in order to preserve or to regain the reins of power. But the result was to reveal the truth to the masses which were not prepared to receive it. When we see to what extent, here in France, the report shook the intellectuals and the Communist workers, we can understand how the Hungarians, for example, were little prepared to understand this awful list of crimes and errors, given without explanation, without historical analysis, without discretion.

While Khruschev was holding the reins, he said: "We will accept the consequences of destalinization as much as we can." After the spectacular reconciliation with Tito, and the Polish riots, you know what happened: this mixture of unbelievable and backward brutality which recalled the old Russian ways.

Destalinization was also accompanied by honest attempts at democratization within Russia which benefited Russian society. I believe one should respect this attempt, even if it failed. Thus I believe in it, as long as it is not suddenly stopped today. But I fear this sudden stop: it is impossible to believe one word of the program brandished by Janos Kadar, impos-

sible to think that he could ask for the withdrawal of Russian troops in Hungary, for then Russian intervention would not have made any sense. The Hungarian people are furious; there are still, we are told, small groups of resisters. How can one imagine that the Russian troops will leave? Once more, words will have signified the opposite of what they mean: Guy Mollet used the word "pacifying" to indicate "military operations"; Kadar says "democratization" to indicate "terror and foreign occupation."

Thus, in my opinion, democratization has ceased in Hungary, if it ever started. It has probably also been stopped elsewhere: one cannot imagine a country maintaining a dictatorship over others without maintaining one over itself. Consequently, I believe in democratization, but I also believe that it has stopped for a while, and that this cessation is evident even in important changes within the Soviet government.

In the light of this, how would you describe your position towards the USSR?

I condemn absolutely and unconditionally the Soviet agression. Without rendering the Russian people responsible, I repeat that its present government has committed a crime and that a dispute between factions in its midst has resulted in giving the power to a group (of "hardboiled" military men; former stalinists?) which today is outdoing stalinism after having denounced it.

In history all crimes are forgotten; we have forgotten ours and other nations will forget them little by little. A time may come when we shall forget those of the USSR if its government changes and if the newcomers attempt to truly apply the principle of equality in relations with socialist and nonsocialist nations. For the moment, there is nothing to do but to condemn. I break off with regret, but completely, my relations with my friends the Soviet writers who do not (or cannot) denounce the massacre in Hungary. One can no

longer feel friendly towards the governing faction of the Soviet bureaucracy: it is horror that is reigning.

If Hungary had been left independent, Marshal Bulganin's proposal to Eisenhower for common intervention in the Egyptian affair could have been taken seriously. But this idea of an urgent action by the two great powers, launched in the wake of the crushing of Hungary, becomes a mockery, a political maneuver. It finishes by discrediting any possible UN action. Consider the idea that now we would find ourselves before a situation such as this: on the one hand, the U.S., with England and France, eventually intervening in Hungary against the USSR; on the other hand, the U.S., with the USSR, eventually putting themselves between Egypt and Israel, against England and France, in the Suez.

I don't know if the UN ever was worth anything, but this absurd confusion proves that it is no longer of any use. Moreover, if there should be a Big Five conference in Switzerland, then peace would have been found once more outside the UN.

What consequences will the events in Hungary have for the French left?

The sad reality today, for me, is that the French left risks extinction by these events unless there is a change in its parties, and unless the minorities take things in hand.

I was reading in this morning's papers that the Socialist party is making a new appeal to the active Communist party members to abandon the party and join the S.F.I.O. [French Socialist party]. This is singularly audacious. It means: quit that impossible Communist party which approves of the crushing of Budapest and come join us in acclaiming those who are torturing Algeria. Before such a contradiction, what remains of the left?

As for the Radical party, I will tell you frankly what I think: I don't think it ever was really leftist. Moreover, it has been representing the right for a number of years. The

changes which were imposed on it by M. Mendès-France, a man who is perfectly respectable in his thoughts and actions, provoked the first schism. In spite of this schism, the other day M. Mendès-France represented only one-fifth of the two thirds of the Radical party in a decisive vote.

In the [Paris] *Express*, you once said of me: "Jean-Paul Sartre has been put out of action." I can say now: "Mendès-France wanted to be part of the action, and he has in turn been put out of action."

Thus I cannot believe anything which comes, from now on, out of what used to be called, at election time, the "Republican Front."

The Socialist party is in a shocking state. It has betrayed its voters. And it has betrayed its socialist mission. It is now occupying—the most unbelievable thing possible—a position at the side of the English Conservatives against the Laborites. The bad conscience of its leaders has become a repugnant cynicism. Did you hear M. Pineau on the radio Sunday? In a whimpering tone, one of unbearable condolences, he had but a few words for the courageous insurgents in Budapest. Then, all of a sudden, his voice became bitter, caustic, and glorious: The UN, he said, had preferred to busy itself with an "Egyptian dictator."

The French Communist party has about 180,000 members, I believe, of which 170,000 are devoted and 10,000 are permanent party workers at 40,000 francs a month, which completes the organization. As long as it was a question of local French politics, up to recent years, the Communist party, in spite of its errors, kept a straight line: it was in contact with the masses; it could not cut itself off from them. For it is sometimes possible to cut oneself off from the masses in an authoritarian regime when one is in power, but not when one is in the opposition.

With some delay it tacked about in favor of the war in Indo-China, and finally steered a straight course. It had at

first discouraged quite a few people, disconcerted by its attitude on Algerian politics; but finally, there also, it recovered in time. Some days after the events in Budapest, it was still gaining votes in the local elections.

But the Communist party is an international party. It is thus a party which must make foreign policy decisions. And these decisions are today being entirely dictated by an organization completely subservient to the most uncompromising viewpoint of the Soviet government.

The results are the most repugnant lies; like those we could read in this morning's *Humanité:* "As they were fleeing, the rioters set fire to numerous buildings. Sunday evening Budapest was a sea of flames. One of the few radio stations left in the hands of the counterrevolutionaries Sunday evening was boasting that the glow from the fires was visible for several kilometers around."

I can hardly imagine the insurgents running from house to house in the Russian-encircled city, being bombarded with phosphorous bombs, setting fire to their own homes. It's the usual technique: one takes the reports of events, distorts and misrepresents them. This is the horrible habit the Communist leaders have got into of slandering people before killing them.

What hope is there, in your analysis, for the gravely affected French left?

It is obvious that as far as we are concerned—many intellectuals think as I do—we are maintaining our complete sympathy towards those thousands of militant Communists who are today in the throes of anguish and who, I understand quite well, at the moment when their party is being criticized on all sides—through its own fault of course—have no desire to abandon it. With those people one can sympathize, for they are not responsible for the massacres in Budapest. They are honest people, earnest and disturbed, and there are some among the ten thousand party workers of the or-

ganization. But the leaders are totally and irremediably responsible.

As much as it might be possible after years of anxiety, rancor, and bitterness, to resume relations with the Soviet Union—a definite change in its political tendencies would suffice—it is not, and never will be, possible to resume relations with the present leaders of the French Communist party. Their every word, their every gesture, is the result of thirty years of lies and mental sclerosis. Their reactions have been those of irresponsible people.

In my opinion, the crime just committed is not the responsibility of those Communists who cannot speak, of those who do not leave the party because it is in danger, for it alone in France today represents the socialist movement; for if it has been slandered, it is not only because of its crimes but because it is the only one going towards socialism. Those men are against the dictatorial policy within the party.

Besides, I am certain that all the leftists would regroup themselves if, on the demand of individuals like Tixier-Vignancour, the Communist party was in danger of extinction.

In the Socialist party also, there is an honest and sincere minority at the head, over a mass of uneasy militants. Of course, this minority has not protested very much, or at least its protests have not as yet been very loud, against the policy of Mollet's government.

But if these Communists who are opposed to dictatorship could have the power and the strength to impose a change in policy, and if this socialist minority could come out with renewed principles, we would then find a sort of popular front which could be the "new left." The Christian left, which really exists and is really leftist, the dynamic elements of radicalism even, the disorganized: all could join this great movement. But if this does not happen, it must be said frankly: the left is lost.

With such a prospect, what do you think will be the relations between Socialists and Communists?

The Communists are dishonored, the Socialists are plunging themselves into the mire. They are accepting the rightist policies: this is what has regularly ruined leftist regimes that have let themselves be influenced. Remember the example of the German Weimar government. Yes, thanks to Guy Mollet, today the right is enjoying a sort of purity. It is not torturing Algeria; it is the Socialists who landed in Suez. If they disorient the French as much as that, how far will they go when the French protest, first about the taxes, then about gasoline, and finally about their sons—for, unfortunately, it will be in that order. They will then be tempted to go to the extreme right. Poujade well understood this; he who forbade his men in the Chamber to vote "for the Queen of England." Fortunately Poujade is an imbecile.

The outlook for the left is very difficult, almost impracticable perhaps, but it is the only hope. The "new left" is full of very intelligent people; it includes workers and small businessmen as well as intellectuals. But it actually represents today only some two hundred thousand people in the entire country. It is a very useful turntable for the making of alliances. But the real problem is elsewhere.

The real problem is in the relations between Socialists and Communists. Can the Communists overturn their own dictators, and can the minority Socialists leave the party? Up to now the militants and party workers of the S.F.I.O. have fought within the party. They have obtained no results. On the other hand, a certain number of Communists have left the party, one by one, where they felt stifled. These departures have had no results either.

One of the very terms of the socialist fight today is precisely the existence of these strong party structures: thus the Communist party headquarters constantly addresses itself "to

the Socialists," without ever making the slightest distinction betwen members and leaders, thus contributing to the consolidation of these leaders. Considerable courage and strength would be necessary from all these opponents of both parties to succeed in changing things.

The other prospect is that popular unity would be achieved with the appearance of a dictatorship, that of Marshal Juin or of someone else. It would be the only way for the left to have its errors forgotten. The Socialist party could shed its own blood to pay for that which it caused to be shed. The Communist party, after having earned the admirable title of the Party of Martyrs, could today receive that of the Party of Murderers: its future martyrs will bring it honor and we of the left will pay for everything we were not able to prevent. I still have hope that this purge will be spared us.

How does this problem of the struggle within the party affect a Communist party member?

If, as everything seems to indicate, the honest and sincere Communists are agitated, let them look for support among the working classes, for example within the C.G.T.

As for the right, it has no right to make claims. Those who did not protest against the tortures in Algeria and against Suez have no right to protest against the events in Hungary.

What will be the reaction of the French Communist party to your stand?

Much as it displeases me to break with the Communist party, I can do it because I protested in time against the Algerian war: I am not opposed to all the sincere and honest leftists, even those who remain in the ranks of the Communist party. I remain with them, even if they should reject me tomorrow.

The leaders will say that they had long been right in calling me "hyena" and "jackal" when Fadeev—who committed suicide—spoke like today's *Humanité*: but I am completely indifferent to what they will say about me, given what they are saying of the events in Hungary.

SAMUEL BECKETT: Dante and the Lobster

It was morning and Belacqua was stuck in the first of the canti in the moon. He was so bogged that he could move neither backward nor forward. Blissful Beatrice was there, Dante also, and she explained the spots on the moon to him. She shewed him in the first place where he was at fault, then she put up her own explanation. She had it from God, therefore he could rely on its being accurate in every particular. All he had to do was to follow her step by step. Part one, the refutation, was plain sailing. She made her point clearly, she said what she had to say without fuss or loss of time. But part two, the demonstration, was so dense that Belacqua could not make head or tail of it. The disproof, the reproof, that was patent. But then came the proof, a rapid shorthand of the real facts, and Belacqua was bogged indeed. Bored also, impatient to get on to Piccarda. Still he pored over the enigma, he would not concede himself conquered, he would understand at least the meanings of the words, the order in which they were spoken and the nature of the satisfaction that they conferred on the misinformed poet, so that when they were ended he was refreshed and could raise his heavy head, intending to return thanks and make formal retraction of his old opinion.

He was still running his brain against this impenetrable passage when he heard midday strike. At once he switched his mind off its task. He scooped his fingers under the book and shovelled it back till it lay wholly on his palms. The Divine Comedy face upward on the lectern of his palms. Thus disposed he raised it under his nose and there he slammed it shut. He held it aloft for a time, squinting at it angrily, pressing the boards inwards with the heels of his hands. Then he laid it aside.

He leaned back in his chair to feel his mind subside and the itch of this mean quodlibet die down. Nothing could be done until his mind got better and was still, which gradually it did. Then he ventured to consider what he had to do next. There was always something that one had to do next. Three large obligations presented themselves. First lunch, then the lobster, then the Italian lesson. That would do to be going on with. After the Italian lesson he had no very clear idea. No doubt some niggling curriculum had been drawn up by someone for the late afternoon and evening, but he did not know what. In any case it did not matter. What did matter was: one, lunch; two, the lobster; three, the Italian lesson. That was more than enough to be going on with.

Lunch, to come off at all, was a very nice affair. If his lunch was to be enjoyable, and it could be very enjoyable indeed, he must be left in absolute tranquility to prepare it. But if he were disturbed now, if some brisk tattler were to come bouncing in now big with a big idea or a petition, he might just as well not eat at all, for the food would turn to bitterness on his palate, or, worse again, taste of nothing. He must be left strictly alone, he must have complete quiet and privacy to prepare the food for his lunch.

The first thing to do was to lock the door. Now nobody could come at him. He deployed an old *Herald* and smoothed it out on the table. The rather handsome face of McCabe the assassin stared up at him. Then he lit the gas-ring and unhooked the square flat toaster, asbestos grill, from its nail and set it precisely on the flame. He found he had to lower the flame. Toast must not on any account be done too rapidly. For bread to be toasted as it ought, through and through, it must be done on a mild steady flame. Otherwise you only charred the outsides and left the pith as sodden as before. If there was one thing he abominated more than another it was to feel his teeth meet in a bathos of pith and dough. And it was so easy to do the thing properly. So, he thought, having

regulated the flow and adjusted the grill, by the time I have the bread cut that will be just right. Now the long barrel-loaf came out of its biscuit-tin and had its end evened off on the face of McCabe. Two inexorable drives with the bread-saw and a pair of neat rounds of raw bread, the main elements of his meal, lay before him, awaiting his pleasure. The stump of the loaf went back into prison, the crumbs, as though there were no such thing as a sparrow in the wide world, were swept in a fever away, and the slices snatched up and carried to the grill. All these preliminaries were very hasty and impersonal.

It was now that real skill began to be required, it was at this point that the average person began to make a hash of the entire proceedings. He laid his cheek against the soft of the bread, it was spongy and warm, alive. But he would very soon take that plush feel off it, by God but he would very quickly take that fat white look off its face. He lowered the gas a suspicion and plaqued one flabby slab down on the glowing fabric, but very pat and precise, so that the whole resembled the Japanese flag. Then on top, there not being room for the two to do evenly side by side, and if you did not do them evenly you might just as well save yourself the trouble of doing them at all, the other round was set to warm. When the first candidate was done, which was only when it was black through and through, it changed places with its comrade, so that now it in its turn lay on top, done to a dead end, black and smoking, waiting till as much could be said of the other.

For the tiller of the field the thing was simple, he had it from his mother. The spots were Cain with his truss of thorns, dispossessed, cursed from the earth, fugitive and vagabond. The moon was that countenance fallen and branded, seared with the first stigma of God's pity, that an outcast might not die quickly. It was a mix-up in the mind of the tiller, but that did not matter. It had been good enough for his mother, it

was good enough for him.

Belacqua on his knees before the flame, poring over the grill, controlled every phase of the broiling. It took time, but if a thing was worth doing at all it was worth doing well, that was a true saying. Long before the end the room was full of smoke and the reek of burning. He switched off the gas, when all that human care and skill could do had been done, and restored the toaster to its nail. This was an act of dilapidation, for it seared a great weal in the paper. This was hooliganism pure and simple. What the hell did he care? Was it his wall? The same hopeless paper had been there fifty years. It was livid with age. It could not be disimproved.

Next a thick paste of Savora, salt and Cayenne on each round, well worked in while the pores were still open with the heat. No butter, God forbid, just a good foment of mustard and salt and pepper on each round. Butter was a blunder, it made the toast soggy. Buttered toast was all right for Senior Fellows and Salvationists, for such as had nothing but false teeth in their heads. It was no good at all to a fairly strong young rose like Belacqua. This meal that he was at such pains to make ready, he would devour it with a sense of rapture and victory, it would be like smiting the sledded Polacks on the ice. He would snap at it with closed eyes, he would gnash it into a pulp, he would vanquish it utterly with his fangs. Then the anguish of pungency, the pang of the spices, as each mouthful died, scorching his palate, bringing tears.

But he was not yet all set, there was yet much to be done. He had burnt his offering, he had not fully dressed it. Yes, he had put the horse behind the tumbrel.

He clapped the toasted rounds together, he brought them smartly together like cymbals, they clave the one to the other on the viscid salve of Savora. Then he wrapped them up for the time being in any old sheet of paper. Then he made himself ready for the road.

Now the great thing was to avoid being accosted. To be

stopped at this stage and have conversational nuisance committed all over him would be a disaster. His whole being was straining forward towards the joy in store. If he were accosted now he might just as well fling his lunch into the gutter and walk straight back home. Sometimes his hunger, more of mind, I need scarcely say, than of body, for this meal amounted to such a frenzy that he would not have hesitated to strike any man rash enough to buttonhole and baulk him, he would have shouldered him out of his path without ceremony. Woe betide the meddler who crosed him when his mind was really set on this meal.

He threaded his way rapidly, his head bowed, through a familiar labyrinth of lanes and suddenly dived into a little family grocery. In the shop they were not surprised. Most days, about this hour, he shot in off the street in this way.

The slab of cheese was prepared. Separated since morning from the piece, it was only waiting for Belacqua to call and take it. Gorgonzola cheese. He knew a man who came from Gorgonzola, his name was Angelo. He had been born in Nice but all his youth had been spent in Gorgonzola. He knew where to look for it. Every day it was there, in the same corner, waiting to be called for. They were very decent obliging people.

He looked sceptically at the cut of cheese. He turned it over on its back to see was the other side any better. The other side was worse. They had laid it better side up, they had practised that little deception. Who shall blame them? He rubbed it. It was sweating. That was something. He stooped and smelt it. A faint fragrance of corruption. What good was that? He didn't want fragrance, he wasn't a bloody gourmet, he wanted a good stench. What he wanted was a good green stenching rotten lump of Gorgonzola cheese, alive, and by God he would have it.

He looked fiercely at the grocer.

"What's that?" he demanded.

The grocer writhed.

"Well?" demanded Belacqua, he was without fear when roused, "is that the best you can do?"

"In the length and breadth of Dublin" said the grocer "you won't find a rottener bit this minute."

Belacqua was furious. The impudent dogsbody, for two pins he would assault him.

'It won't do" he cried, "do you hear me, it won't do at all. I won't have it." He ground his teeth.

The grocer, instead of simply washing his hands like Pilate, flung out his arms in a wild crucified gesture of supplication. Sullenly Belacqua undid his packet and slipped the cadaverous tablet of cheese between the hard cold black boards of the toast. He stumped to the door where he whirled round however.

"You heard me?" he cried.

"Sir" said the grocer. This was not a question, nor yet an expression of acquiescence. The tone in which it was let fall made it quite imposible to know what was in the man's mind. It was a most ingenious riposte.

"I tell you" said Belacqua with great heat "this won't do at all. If you can't do better than this" he raised the hand that held the packet "I shall be obliged to go for my cheese elsewhere. Do you mark me?"

"Sir" said the grocer.

He came to the threshold of his store and watched the indignant customer hobble away. Belacqua had a spavined gait, his feet were in ruins, he suffered with them almost continuously. Even in the night they took no rest, or next to none. For then the cramps took over from the corns and hammer-toes, and carried on. So that he would press the fringes of his feet desperately against the end-rail of the bed or, better again, reach down with his hand and drag them up and back towards the instep. Skill and patience could disperse the pain, but there it was, complicating his night's

rest.

The grocer, without closing his eyes or taking them off the receding figure, blew his nose in the skirt of his apron. Being a warm-hearted human man he felt sympathy and pity for this queer customer who always looked ill and dejected. But at the same time he was a small tradesman, don't forget that, with a small tradesman's sense of personal dignity and what was what. Thruppence, he cast it up, thruppence worth of cheese per day, one and a tanner per week. No, he would fawn on no man for that, no, not on the best in the land. He had his pride.

Stumbling along by devious ways towards the lowly public where he was expected, in the sense that the entry of his grotesque person would provoke no comment or laughter, Belacqua gradually got the upper hand of his choler. Now that lunch was as good as a *fait accompli,* because the incontinent bosthoons of his own class, itching to pass on a big idea or inflict an appointment, were seldom at large in this shabby quarter of the city, he was free to consider items two and three, the lobster and the lesson, in closer detail.

At a quarter to three he was due at the School. Say five to three. The public closed, the fish-monger reopened, at half-past two. Assuming then that his lousy old bitch of an aunt had given her order in good time that morning, with strict injunctions that it should be ready and waiting so that her blackguard boy should on no account be delayed when he called for it first thing in the afternoon, it would be time enough if he left the public as it closed, he could remain on till the last moment. Benissimo. He had half-a-crown. That was two pints of draught anyway and perhaps a bottle to wind up with. Their bottled stout was particularly excellent and well up. And he would still be left with enough coppers to buy a *Herald* and take a tram if he felt tired or was pinched for time. Always assuming, of course, that the lobster was all ready to be handed over. God damn these tradesmen, he

thought, you can never rely on them. He had not done an exercise but that did not matter. His Professoressa was so charming and remarkable. Signorina Adriana Ottolenghi! He did not believe it possible for a woman to be more intelligent or better informed than the little Ottolenghi. So he had set her on a pedestal in his mind, apart from other women. She had said last day that they would read *Il Cinque Maggio* together. But she would not mind if he told her, as he proposed to, in Italian, he would frame a shining phrase on his way from the public, that he would prefer to postpone the *Cinque Maggio* to another occasion. Manzoni was an old woman, Napoleon was another. *Napoleon di mezza calzetta, fa l'amore a Giacominetta.* Why did he think of Manzoni as an old woman? Why did he do him that injustice? Pellico was another. They were all old maids, suffragettes. He must ask his Signorina where he could have received that impression, that the 19th century in Italy was full of old hens trying to cluck like Pindar. Carducci was another. Also about the spots on the moon. If she could not tell him there and then she would make it up, only too gladly, against the next time. Everything was all set now and in order. Bating, of course, the lobster, which had to remain an incalculable factor. He must just hope for the best. And expect the worst, he thought gaily, diving into the public, as usual.

Belacqua drew near to the school, quite happy, for all had gone swimmingly. The lunch had been a notable success, it would abide as a standard in his mind. Indeed he could not imagine its ever being superseded. And such a pale soapy piece of cheese to prove so strong! He must only conclude that he had been abusing himself all these years in relating the strength of cheese directly to its greenness. We live and learn, that was a true saying. Also his teeth and jaws had been in heaven, splinters of vanquished toast spraying forth at each gnash. It was like eating glass. His mouth burned and ached with the exploit. Then the food had been further spiced

by the intelligence, transmitted in a low tragic voice across the counter by Oliver the improver, that the Malahide murderer's petition for mercy, signed by half the land, having been rejected, the man must swing at dawn in Mountjoy and nothing could save him. Ellis the hangman was even now on his way. Belacqua, tearing at the sandwich and swilling the precious stout, pondered on McCabe in his cell.

The lobster was ready after all, the man handed it over instanter, and with such a pleasant smile. Really a little bit of courtesy and goodwill went a long way in this world. A smile and a cheerful word from a common working-man and the face of the world was brightened. And it was so easy, a mere question of muscular control.

"Lepping" he said cheerfully, handing it over.

"Lepping?" said Belacqua. What on earth was that?

"Lepping fresh, sir" said the man, "fresh in this morning."

Now Belacqua, on the analogy of mackerel and other fish that he had heard described as lepping fresh when they had been taken but an hour or two previously, supposed the man to mean that the lobster had very recently been killed.

Signorina Adriana Ottolenghi was waiting in the little front room off the hall, which Belacqua was naturally inclined to think of rather as the vestibule. That was her room, the Italian room. On the same side, but at the back, was the French room. God knows where the German room was. Who cared about the German room anyway?

He hung up his coat and hat, laid the long knobby brown-paper parcel on the hall-table, and went prestly in to the Ottolenghi.

After about half-an-hour of this and that obiter, she complimented him on his grasp of the language.

"You make rapid progress" she said in her ruined voice.

There subsisted as much of the Ottolenghi as might be expected to of the person of a lady of a certain age who had found being young and beautiful and pure more of a bore

than anything else.

Belacqua, dissembling his great pleasure, laid open the moon enigma.

"Yes" she said "I know the passage. It is a famous teaser. Off-hand I cannot tell you, but I will look it up when I get home."

The sweet creature! She would look it up in her big Dante when she got home. What a woman!

"It occurred to me" she said "apropos of I don't know what, that you might do worse than make up Dante's rare movements of compassion in Hell. That used to be" her past tenses were always sorowful "a favourite question."

He assumed an expression of profundity.

"In that connexion" he said "I recall one superb pun anyway: *'qui vive la pieta quando è ben morta. . .'*"

She said nothing.

"Is it not a great phrase?" he gushed.

She said nothing.

"Now" he said like a fool "I wonder how you could translate that?"

Still she said nothing. Then:

"Do you think" she murmured "it is absolutely necessary to translate it?"

Sounds as of conflict were borne in from the hall. Then silence. A knuckle tambourined on the door, it flew open and lo it was Mlle Glain, the French instructress, clutching her cat, her eyes out on stalks, in a state of the greatest agitation.

"Oh" she gasped "forgive me. I intrude, but what was in the bag?"

"The bag?" said the Ottolenghi.

Mlle Glain took a French step forward.

"The parcel" she buried her face in the cat "the parcel in the hall."

Belacqua spoke up composedly.

"Mine" he said, "a fish."

He did not know the French for lobster. Fish would do very well. Fish had been good enough for Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour. It was good enough for Mlle Glain.

"Oh" said Mlle Glain, inexpressibly relieved, "I caught him in the nick of time." She administered a tap to the cat. "He would have tore it to flitters."

Belacqua began to feel a little anxious.

"Did he actually get at it?" he said.

"No no" said Mlle Glain "I caught him just in time. But I did not know" with a blue-stocking snigger "what it might be, so I thought I had better come and ask."

Base prying bitch.

The Ottolenghi was faintly amused.

"Puisqu'il n'y a pas de mal . . ." she said with great fatigue and elegance.

"Heureusement" it was clear as once that Mlle Glain was devout *"heureusement."*

Chastening the cat with little skelps she took herself off. The grey hairs of her maidenhead screamed at Belacqua. A virginal bluestocking, honing after a penny's worth of scandal.

"Where were we?" said Belacqua.

But Neopolitan patience has its limits.

"Where are we ever?" cried the Ottolenghi, "where we were, as we were."

Belacqua drew near to the house of his aunt. Let us call it winter, that dusk may fall now and a moon rise. At the corner of the street a horse was down and a man sat on his head. I know, thought Belacqua, that that is considered the right thing to do. But why? A lamplighter flew by on his bike, tilting with his pole at the standards, jousting a little yellow light into the evening. A poorly dressed couple stood in the bay of a pretentious gateway, she sagging against the railings, her head lowered, he standing facing her. He stood

up close to her, his hands dangled by his sides. Where we were, thought Belacqua, as we were. He walked on, gripping his parcel. Why not piety and pity both, even down below? Why not mercy and Godliness together? A little mercy in the stress of sacrifice, a little mercy to rejoice against judgment. He thought of Jonah and the gourd and the pity of a jealous God on Nineveh. And poor McCabe, he would get it in the neck at dawn. What was he doing now, how was he feeling? He would relish one more meal, one more night.

His aunt was in the garden, tending whatever flowers die at that time of year. She embraced him and together they went down into the bowels of the earth, into the kitchen in the basement. She took the parcel and undid it and abruply the lobster was on the table, on the oilcloth, discovered.

"They assured me it was fresh" said Belacqua.

Suddenly he saw the creature move, this neuter creature. Definitely it changed its position. His hand flew to his mouth.

"Christ!" he said "it's alive."

His aunt looked at the lobster. It moved again. It made a faint nervous act of life on the oilcloth. They stood above it, looking down on it, exposed cruciform on the oilcloth. It shuddered again. Belacqua felt he would be sick.

"My God" he whined "it's alive, what'll we do?"

The aunt simply had to laugh. She bustled off to the pantry to fetch her smart apron, leaving him goggling down at the lobster, and came back with it on and her sleeves rolled up, all business.

"Well" she said "it is to be hoped so, indeed."

"All this time" muttered Belacqua. Then, suddenly aware of her hideous equipment: "What are you going to do?" he cried.

"Boil the beast" she said, "what else?"

"But it's not dead" protested Belacqua "you can't boil it like that."

She looked at him in astonishment. Had he taken leave of

his senses?

"Have sense" she said sharply, "lobsters are always boiled alive. They must be." She caught up the lobster and laid it on its back. It trembled. "They feel nothing" she said.

In the depths of the sea it had crept into the cruel pot. For hours, in the midst of its enemies, it had breathed secretly. It had survived the Frenchwoman's cat and his witless clutch. Now it was going alive into scalding water. It had to. Take into the air my quiet breath.

Belacqua looked at the old parchment of her face, grey in the dim kitchen.

"You make a fuss" she said angrily "and upset me and then lash into it for your dinner."

She lifted the lobster clear of the table. It had about thirty seconds to live.

Well, thought Belacqua, it's quick death, God help us all.

It is not.

HENRI MICHAUX: Miserable Miracle

[*Henri Michaux says that his new book,* Miserable Miracle *(from which we print here the second chapter) "is an exploration. By means of words, signs, drawings. Mescalin the subject explored."* Miserable Miracle *is Michaux's report on his experiments with mescalin pursued over many months. Louise Varèse, Michaux's translator, says that here Michaux "is both clinician and patient. His 'eye glued to the microscope,' he notes the demonic behavior of mescalin in himself while at the same time observing the grotesque, glittering, hyperbolic spectacles staged by the drug.*

"In religious rites for countless centuries, Indians in Mexico have worshiped the god of peyotl, which is the mescal cactus bud from which mescalin, its active principle, is derived. In recent years the hallucinatory properties of mescalin have attracted the intensified interest of scientists in their search for the baffling secret of mental disease. In less scientific circles the drug is regarded as the open sesame to a new 'artificial paradise.' But is was not for the phantasmagoria of colors in the mescalin world, or a desire to escape from this one, that induced Michaux to join the scientists in their exploration. It was the curiosity which is known as scientific and which is shared by creators in all fields. Michaux's report on his experiments is a scientific document as well as a work of art.

"A painter as well as a poet, Michaux after his third experiment began recording his impressions in revealing drawings, two of which are reproduced here. He also kept a journal while under the influence of the drug which, though too illegible to serve as text, provided him with milestones to guide his memory back over the monstrous road he and mescalin had traveled together.

"Michaux differs from other writers on the subject in that he not only describes the often beautiful, always exorbitant,

repetitious, robot-like, rushing, trembling, terrifying world of mescalin, not only details his hair-raising experiences: he comes close to giving us the experience itself."]

•

In a dimly lighted room, after taking ¾ of a 0.1 gr. ampule of mescalin

In a state of great uneasiness, of anxiety, of inner solemnity.—The world retreating in the distance, an ever increasing distance.—Each word becoming more and more dense, too dense to be uttered from now on, word complete in itself, word in a nest, while the noise of the wood fire in the fireplace becomes the only presence, becomes important—strange and absorbing its movements. . . . In a state of expectancy, an expectancy that becomes with each minute more pregnant, more restive, more ineffable, more painful to endure . . . and to what point can it be endured?

shivers
shivers
gnawings

Far away, like a soft whistling of the wind in the shrouds, harbinger of storms, a shiver, a shiver lacking flesh and skin, an abstract shiver, a shiver in the workshop of the brain, in a zone where shivering with shivers is impossible. Shivering with what then?

That something can happen that a world of things can happen.

As if there were an opening, an opening which would be an assembling, which would be a world, which would be that something can happen, that many things can happen, that there is a crowd, that there is a swarming of what is possible, that everything is crawling with possibilities, that the person I vaguely

Phenominal swarmings of possible things that want to be, are hurrying, are imminent.

hear walking outside might ring the bell, might enter, might set the place on fire, might climb up to the roof, might throw himself howling onto the pavement of the courtyard. Might everything, anything, without choosing, without any one of these actions having precedence over another. I am not particularly disturbed by it either. "Might" is what counts, this prodigious urgency of possibilities which have become enormous and continue to multiply.

might
might
might

(The sounds of the radio or of records, words or music, have no effect. Only reality sows and is productive.)

Beginnings of inner visions.

Knives long as trajectories.

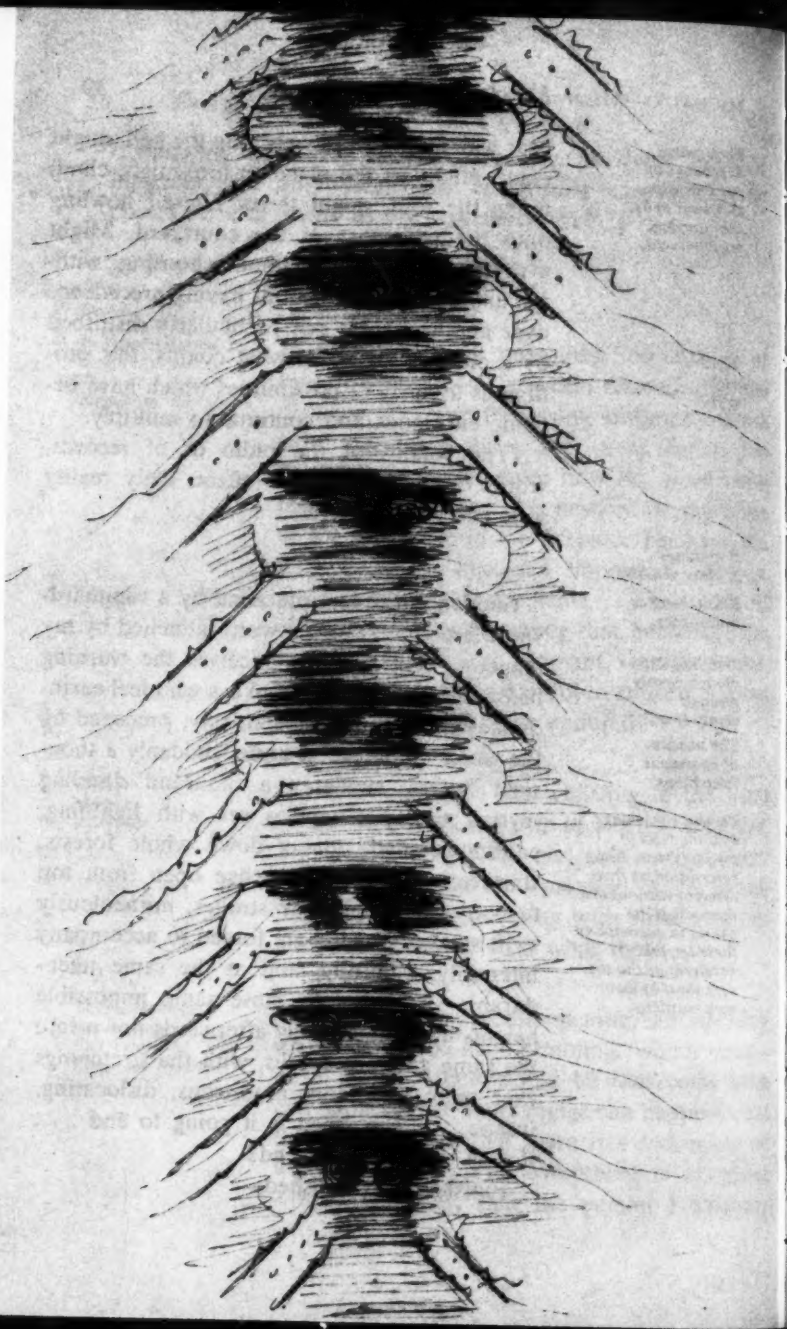
Dazzling knives plough swiftly through empty space.

The torture of enormous stretchings.

Painful stretchings as if the cells of my body were being forced (unless their own convulsions are themselves the cause) to accompany these terrible accelerations to the very limit of their own elasticity.

Suddenly, but first preceded by a vanguard-word, a courier-word, a word launched by my language central which receives the warning before I do, like those monkeys who feel earthquakes before men do, suddenly, preceded by the word "blinding," a knife, suddenly a thousand knives, suddenly a thousand dazzling scythes of light, scythes set with lightning, enormous, made to cut down whole forests, start furiously splitting space open from top to bottom with gigantic strokes, miraculously swift strokes which I am forced to accompany internally, painfully, and at the same unendurable speed, up to those same impossible heights and immediately afterwards down into the same abysmal depths, with the stretchings ever more and more monstrous, dislocating, insane . . . and when is it going to end . . . if it is ever going to end?

Finished. It's finished.



from the tip terribly high to the base terribly low

Himalayas all at once spring up higher than the highest mountain, sharply pointed, false peaks though, diagrams of mountains, but not less high for all that, inordinate triangles with angles ever more acute, to the very edge of space, idiotic but immense.

divergents divergents

iMMense terremoto Mense.

While I am still occupied looking at these extraordinary mountains, the intense urgency that has me in its grip, having settled on the letters "m" of the word "immense," which I was mentally pronouncing, the double down strokes of these miserable "m's" begin stretching out into the fingers of gloves, into the nooses of lassos and these in turn, preposterously large, shoot up toward the heights—arches for unthinkable, baroque cathedrals, arches ridiculously elongated resting on their unchanged little bases. It is utterly grotesque.

Remarkable words with letters bigger than aqueducts ringed with quicksilver, flamboyant and shocking, like advertising.

Enough. I've understood. I mustn't think of anything! I mustn't think at all. Vacuity, and lie low! I mustn't give a single idea, not a single spare part to the mad mechanism. But already the machine has resumed its movement at a hundred images a minute. The Himalaya-producing machine, which had stopped, now starts again. Great plowshares plow up a stretch of space which doesn't seem to care. Enormous plowshares plow without any reason for plowing. Plowshares and again great scythes mowing empty space from top to bottom with enormous strokes that will be repeated fifty, a hundred, a hundred and fifty times. (Until the accumulators have run down.)

In the midst of this unceasing earthquake, I keep thinking of making inordinately rising declarations.

Why bother, since nothing can be done

about it? The stretchings are less painful. Am I getting used to them?

A whiteness appears,
a whiteness
to blind you,
dazzling,
like molten metal
pouring out of
a Bessemer
converter.
If a detonation
could be whiteness.

So white really
exists.

To have to live
always in
constant
scintillation.

And "White" appears. Absolute white. White whiter than all whiteness. White of the advent of white. White without compromise, by exclusion, by the total eradication of non-white. White mad, exasperated, shrieking with whiteness. Fanatical, furious, riddling the eyeball. White atrociously electric, implacable, murderous. White in blasts of white. God of "white." No, not a god, a howler monkey. (If only my cells don't burst.)

Cessation of white. I feel that for me white will have something immoderate about it for a long time to come.

An ocean that has no
salt, no iodine,
no breeze, does not
refresh, an ocean
for an optician.
Slashed to pieces
by reflections.
Through me the
sea undulates.
Torture of
undulation.

Breaking against
nothing.

On the edge of a tropical ocean, in a thousand reflections of the silver light of an invisible moon, among the undulations of restless waters, ceaselessly changing. . . .

Among silent lappings, among the tremors of the shining expanse, in the swift ebb and flow, martyrizing patches of light, in the slashings of luminous loops, arcs, and lines, in the occulations, the reappearances, in the dancing flashes being decomposed, recomposed, contracted, spread out, only to be rearranged once more before me, with me, within me, I, drowned, and in the midst of an intolerable buffeting, my calm violated a thousand times by the oscillating tongues of infinity, sinusoidally overrun by the multitude of liquid lines,

Torture of
what is unstable,
of what is

impermanent, torture of being tickled by iridescence.

enormous with a thousand folds, *I was and I was not,* I was caught, I was lost, I was in a state of complete ubiquity. The thousands upon thousands of murmurings were the thousand slashings in myself.

I am being hollowed out. . .

Sensation of a fissure. I hide my head in a scarf in order to know, to recognize my surroundings.

There is the fact of its being torrential, there is the fact of its plunging headlong, there is the fact of its bursting.

I see a furrow. A furrow with little, hurried, transversal sweepings. In it a fluid, its brightness mercurial, its behavior torrential, its speed electric. Seemingly elastic too. Swish, swish, swish, it whisks along showing innumerable little tremors. I also see stripes.

the unforgettable furrow

Where is this furrow exactly? It is just as though it were crossing my skull from the forehead to the occiput. Yet I can see it. A furrow without beginning or end, and whose average breadth is appreciably the same above and below, a furrow which I'd say comes from the farthest ends of the earth.

A lost phantom was lying at full length, probably myself. A furrow runs through this motionless giant while storms, smoke, cuts, gashes were torturing this "no man's land."

My body's envelope (if I think or try to think about it) floats freely around the furrow (how can it?), enormous balloon containing this little river, for this great furrow, when I try to see my body at the same time, is only a rivulet, but still lively, untamed—champagne and spitting cat. An immense space between my body and the furrow, with the furrow running through the middle. Sometimes there is nothing in this space. (Strange, I thought I was full.) Sometimes there are little dots all over it.

The electric rivulet

So then, I contain the furrow, except at its extremities which disappear in the distance,

unspeakable
currents
counter-acting
counting-flowing
cross-hatching

too, too shaken

this rock
corresponds to
I don't know what
in me which
breaks, and breaks
again, endlessly
re-forms and
breaks again.

cleavage

breaches
breaches
breaches everywhere

at the same time
angular rents in a bag,
intolerably
angular.

and yet it is myself, it is my instants, one after the other, flowing in its crystalline flux. In this flux my life advances. Fractured into a thousand fractures, through this rivulet I have continual prolongation in time. It might stop. Perhaps. Yet no one seeing it would believe that it could ever stop flowing, leave me there.

Now I am in front of a rock. It splits. No, it is no longer split. It is as before. Again it is split, entirely. No it is not split at all. It splits once more. Once more it ceases to be split, and this goes on indefinitely. Rock intact, then cleavage, then rock intact, then cleavage, then rock intact, then cleavage, then rock intact, then cleavage. . . .

Cardboard now, cardboard sheets, cardboard boxes, manufactures of cardboard, factories of cardboard, truckloads of cardboard . . . and finally an avalanche of cardboard. (Documentary film or sonata?)

Enormous sheets of cardboard, bigger than screens, of a gray that is unpleasant to look at and a texture that must be unpleasant to touch, are being handled very briskly by hands I do not see.

The devil take all this cardboard. I'm not interested!

Why all this cardboard? I have just noticed a certain numbness of my lip and upper jaw, the beginning of the well-known sensation (before the extraction of a tooth) of the "cardboard mouth."

Cessation.

First stage toward visions of colors.

"What, past noon already! Is it possible? And I haven't seen any colors yet, real, brilliant colors. Perhaps I am not going to see any." Annoyed, I wrap up in my scarf again. Then, apparently the result of my reflection,[1] released by the thought or by the switch-button word, I am submerged by thousands of little dots of colors, a tidal wave, a deluge, but with each tiny globule perfectly distinct, isolated, detached.

Cessation of the deluge.

Apparition of colors.

Return of the deluge. . . . What is happening? An enemy of these colors? No longer any colors at all. Yet they are not quite absent either. Or are they vanishing too quickly now to be really perceptible? (Like an electric current not sufficiently strong or prolonged.) At moments it seems to me they are there. Certainly not much of a spectacle, or I might say that it is to a real spectacle what "noisily" is to "noise." Odd obliquity.

Jusillade of colors.

At last equivocation ends. This time color abounds. A hundred Empire State buildings at night, all windows lighted with all kinds of lights, would not fill with as many splashes of distinct unbelievable colors[2] the screen of my vision.

1 Or the reverse: the thought was launched by an imperceptible sensation, a pre-sensation.

2 I know now, and will know even better soon, that the teeming drawings —"*burrées*," as Dr. Ferdière calls them—of some of the insane, are not exaggerated but give a *moderate* view of their extraordinary universe.

On one of my frontiers (I had at first called it my "Spitzberg") I am saturated with an impossibly immense area of colored bulbs.

Cessation.

Not a single color. As if "it" no longer had the strength to be color.

It has come back, it begins again. The mechanism is once more running: *Green!*

Green? Not green?

Green. Did I see it? Too fugitively seen. I know that there is green, that there is going to be green, that there is an expectation of green, that there is green frantically straining toward existence, a green that couldn't be greener. It is not, and there is any amount of it (!)

I emit "green."

Here it comes! It has come out. Fully.

I am honeycombed with alveolae of green. Greens like bright dots on the back of a beetle. The zone that emits green is in me. I am wrapped in green, immured. I end in green. (A kind of emerald green.)

Extinction of green

A large plaque, fairly circular and as though elastic. A spasm causes it successively and almost imperceptibly to contract, then to expand again.

It is also as though elastically pink. Pink, then not pink, then pink, then not pink, or barely pink, then very pink. Pink spreads. Innumerable pink bulbs appear. Pink spreads more and more. I generate it, I sparkle with

In the pink sewer.

it. I am sprouting pink. I suffocate with pinkness, with pinkening. The pecking of this pink disturbs me, is odious.

Cessation.

Thank heaven!

Disjunction

I hear my cleaning woman's step in the hall. She has come back. Why! Does she want something? Is she going to knock on the door? I hope not.

At this moment I see (with inner sight) my fist suddenly strike out with violence in her direction, fifteen, twenty times in succession, at the end of my extended arm, but long, long, long, an arm three meters long, a meager arm and, like my childish fist, unrecognizable. Stupefying sight. Anger? But I feel none. *It* has burned up feeling. *It* has caught, not even the dynamic, but the kinetic side of anger, with all the emotional sensation conjured away. That is the strange part of this mechanism. To express an emotion it excludes all consciousness of emotion. That is why, like a stranger, I watch this unsuccessful mechanical gesture, wondering if it isn't really idiotic of me to want to interpret this ridiculous spectacle as a consequence of an anger which I don't know if I feel, and which at the very most corresponds to "If only no one opens the door!"

There is haste, there is urgency in me.[3]

[3] What would happen if this accelerator were administered to slow-motion animals, to the chameleon, to the lazy three-toed sloth, or to the marmot just coming out of hibernation?

Phenomenon of breakings and reversings of the current.

a madman with his hand on the switch

I should like. I should like to be rid of all this. I should like to start from zero. I should like to get out of here. Not to go out through an exit. I should like a multiple exit, like a fan. An exit that never ends, an ideal exit, an exit such that having gone out I should immediately start to go out again.

I should like to get up. No, I'd like to lie down, no, I'd like to get up immediately, no, I'd like to lie down at once, I want to get up, I am going to telephone, no, I'm not going to telephone. But I really must. No, I'm going to lie down. And thus, ten, twenty, fifty times in a few minutes, I shall decide, then decide the contrary, I shall come back to my first decision, go back to my second decision, return once more to the first, as wholeheartedly, fanatically eager as for a crusade one moment, and the next totally indifferent, uninterested, perfectly relaxed.

The current always being switched on switched off.

No question of saying, as in the case of the visual images, that I'm not fooled, that I understand the mechanism (which is the same). Twenty times I am on the point of getting up to telephone, as many times, indifferent, I give up. I'm on the shuttle line. Current off, current on, current off, current on. I shall be like that as many times as "it" wishes, completely mobile and then completely at rest and tranquil and serene on the platform of a single second. (Or perhaps of a double or triple second.)

On the tables and on those at the tables many crystals.

Once more there is haste. Great haste. Intolerable haste. Haste is about to present a spectacle, short and repeated over and over.

The eye, when it enjoys, enjoys crystallinely

Mesc. can only supply gags: I see an enormous restaurant. Numerous stories, and people are eating on all the balconies (yes, there are balconies *and* with pillarets!), thousands of tables, thousands of people eating, thousands of waiters in blue jackets. Funny idea! Dishes are served. Dishes are removed. Are served again. Are re-removed. No sooner is the dish served than the plate is taken away. No sooner is the plate set down than the dish is taken away. The speed is not even that of a gag, but of a metronome. It is not that of an alternating current either. Try to picture the details: these diners are like manikins, the waiters too. No expression one can remember. No individuality in the movements either.

Flashes of hunger

What possible explanation? Yet this utterly idiotic spectacle is the translation of a prodigious mechanism. One must realize that mescalin provokes the most violent sensations of hunger, present one minute, gone the next: *sparks of hunger*. For mescalin instantaneously "images" and realizes sensations or ideas without the least participation of the will, and without any consciousness of desire. The silly gag is the result of this perfect, automatic functioning.

Mesc. provokes desires which appear and disappear in an instant.

The rest of the spectacle—what I detest the most: exhibitionism. That of clothes, that of the "pleasures of the table." The festive atmosphere and balconies where colors are displayed to give an air of gaiety, have not been forgotten either.

Pause.

Several pauses. A few colored plains.

Another pause.

This time it must surely be the end.

It was only the end of something, the end of the tremors.

The cellular brushings have ceased. Tickling is about to begin. And what will the cells do, not knowing how to respond to tickling with tickling.

I was going to find out. Something I should never have expected.

After a long blank period and in a kind of lull after battle (or was it my capitulation that was in preparation), the rapid motions were still there, much less violent, not lacerating at all, yet still master . . . as I was to have occasion to discover.

The retinal circus.

In the paradise of everything flashy

Then, for no particular reason, except—and it was reason enough—that I had been surprised not to hear any music (inner music), though the outside noises and even the distant strains of a band penetrated intact, I see, after many different blues, at least fifty trumpet players with raised trumpets looking perfectly ridiculous, dressed in blue and pink[4] costumes, of a sort I don't recognize and don't care to, but very operetta looking, and who begin to play or at least to go through the

[4] We think it wonderful to see colors appear when we think of music. Naturally, if one had that in addition! But the first thing one notices, and with much annoyance, is that one can no longer mentally evoke sounds. The circuit is closed. Why? Does one center inhibit another? Excessive attention fixed on one side (optic) preventing attention on the other (acoustic)?

It is a law I have remarked in normal life and it is flagrant under the influence of mescalin: a closing of one opening to create another. A new opening automatically starts the closing of another side. . . . Sensibility on one side calls for insensibility on the other. It is what graphologists find it so hard to understand.

What an absurdity, a total man, all parts of him equally present, important, accentuated.

sickly forms perforated, hollow

motions at an incredible speed, with half a city such as Orléans listening to them, also grotesquely dressed, and as conspicuous as a necktie. Besides I'd swear there must have been forty rows of balconies one above the other (and, so that nothing should be lacking, pillarets ridiculously elongated). And all of this, of course, in the colors of ribbons for young ladies and candy for children. Perfectly nauseating.

Monuments of another civilization.

the catching word.

disorderly raid on words, and so rapid that there is no time to charge them with meaning. It is only later that one can consider them from the point of view of meaning.

Ludicrous, all that! Intolerable! Why suddenly did this thought occur to me, why did I think of the word "solicit"? Who would ever suppose it to be so "soliciting"? Normally it means nothing to me and departs without leaving a ripple, without creating a ripple.

But now, hardly arrived, irresistibly it drags after it its brothers and cousins (in the most superficial way), its distant cousins that are barely related (I here choose the least farfetched), the irremediable, the inexhaustible, the inexorable, the indestructible, the indefinable, the ineradicable, the indefatigable, the incredible, the innumerable, the irrevocable, the incurable, the insuperable, the incontestable, to say nothing of the incompressible, the inacceptable, the indomitable, and a whole string of others which I really must interrupt, now that I can. For at the time, not only was I unable to interrupt the stupid enumeration but I had to pronounce all the words, repeating them in my mind rapidly and emphatically and very disagreeably. (A strange elastic bridge in fact connected me with each one of

Horrible this compulsory almost muscular cooperation with the disgraceful procession of words.

them.)

Impossible to stop them. The adverbs, the long adjectives in *able*, and the prefixes and the "ins"—"in" for mescalin, irresistible, of course.

(After all, mescalin was expressing itself in its own way. Expressing me. In these words, launched haphazardly, spasmodically, one recognized "obliquely" the unhappy situation.)

Cessation! At last!

Pause. Long pause.
A final volley.

Another pause . . .
Could it be finished?[5]

caricature of composition and of creation.

Against a given background, at a new speed, certain ideas alone can circulate

And now, at this idea of finished, the bad composer I have become, because of my weakened condition (?), because of the speed of the brain waves I have to conform to, because of the unwonted pace I am forced to keep up, here he is—here I am—beginning to employ the tritest topics of amplification and, in the silliest, most systematic way to draw up the easiest antitheses, even easier enumerations, everything that is finish, final, exit (and not only the images but, as supreme idiocy, even the words "saying themselves" headlong in

[5] At about this moment, in the semi-darkness I start to get up—"Don't leave," says one of my companions who had wanted, I thought, a glass of water . . . "Don't leave." "Leave where?" I return laughingly in order, among other things, to dispel the idea that I am attempting more than they are and exposing myself to certain mishaps. They laugh. But the *word* coming back to me begins to function, combining with *finish* in an endless series. *Finish* and *leave* becoming inexhaustible.

Others are not attached to anything, do not correspond to the spasmodic jerkings and consequently will not show any images on the film, though they may well count more than others which instantly open up optical fairs.

me): signs with the directions "exit," ship moored "at the end of the quay," panorama, viewpoint at the end of the path! all this—stupid schoolboy stuff—begins filing past me to my utter bewilderment.

Ridiculous, outrageous, and unavoidable, and which I for the life of me could never have imagined.

Impetus in jerks impetus indefinitely renewed.

Yet what counts, what is prodigious in this grotesque phenomenon, is this mad, indefatigable urgency, this ever recurring urgency which is such that at the final point and on the way out, one is still in a hurry, in a hurry to go on to the finish, a finish which is never final enough.[6] At the top of the acute angle of a mad triangle, the final point will become the starting point for the base of another triangle whose final point will beget still another triangle which in turn . . . and so on indefinitely.

Everything becoming arrows shooting desperately toward the final point.

The urgency is in no way abated by a third final point, or by a fourth, or by a tenth, or by a branch, simultaneously developing collateral images, or by the image of an ocean liner leaving the dock, or by an airplane taking off, or by a sudden rocket, or by an intercontinental rocket passing through the stratosphere, or by an interplanetary rocket passing beyond the bounds of terrestrial gravitation.

discontinuous progressions

No matter how far away it is, it has to launch another rocket, which in turn, pausing, launches another rocket, which in turn, pausing, launches another rocket, perpetual for-

[6] Gasoline, ether, carbon tetrachloride used by René Daumal—who from them derived an . . . astonishing faith—all products which violently eliminate fat and sugar from the brain, induce this same phenomenon.

Speed in measured rhythm

ward spurts to give free scope to the craving for departure, craving for going beyond, false rockets, in fact, all of them, abstract, diagrammatic, but no less eager to reach, by successive stages, an ever receding infinity.

the experiment of introducing images into mescalin visions.

Into my inner visions I try to introduce an image from outside. With this intention, I turn over the pages of an abundantly illustrated zoology book open beside me and look at the pictures of different animals. Nothing happens. When I close my eyes they are not there. They are frankly excluded. No sign of any after-image. As soon as they are out of my sight they seem to have been cut by a knife. For all that, I try again, looking at the giraffes and the ostriches, elongated animals which ought to tempt mescalin's elongating propensity. But even while I am looking at them I know very well that I am not "detaining" them. When I close my eyes, not the slightest image. I pick up the book again, but tired of pictures (more than tired, I have no contact with them at all), in the flickering light of the wood fire I begin to glance at the text, with difficulty making out a few words: "the giraffe . . . a ruminant, between the antelope and the . . . by its shape. . . ." Wait! At these words something seems to stir. I close my eyes and, already responding to the mention of their name, two dozen giraffes are galloping in the distance, rhythmically raising their slender legs and their interminable necks. True, they have nothing in common with the mus-

cular, beautifully colored animals of the photographs which I had just been looking at, and which had been unable to create any "inner" giraffe. These were diagrams in motion of the idea "giraffe," drawings formed by reflection, not reproduction.

To enter into the visions of mescalin the giraffes must grow even taller.

But tall they certainly were. High as houses of seven stories but with bases not proportionately larger. In order to enter into the mescalin world they had been forced to become these slender giants, these ridiculous, vertiginous manikins that a mild mistral could have toppled over, their legs broken.

Cessation.

ruins ruins perpetually in ruin (without ever falling)

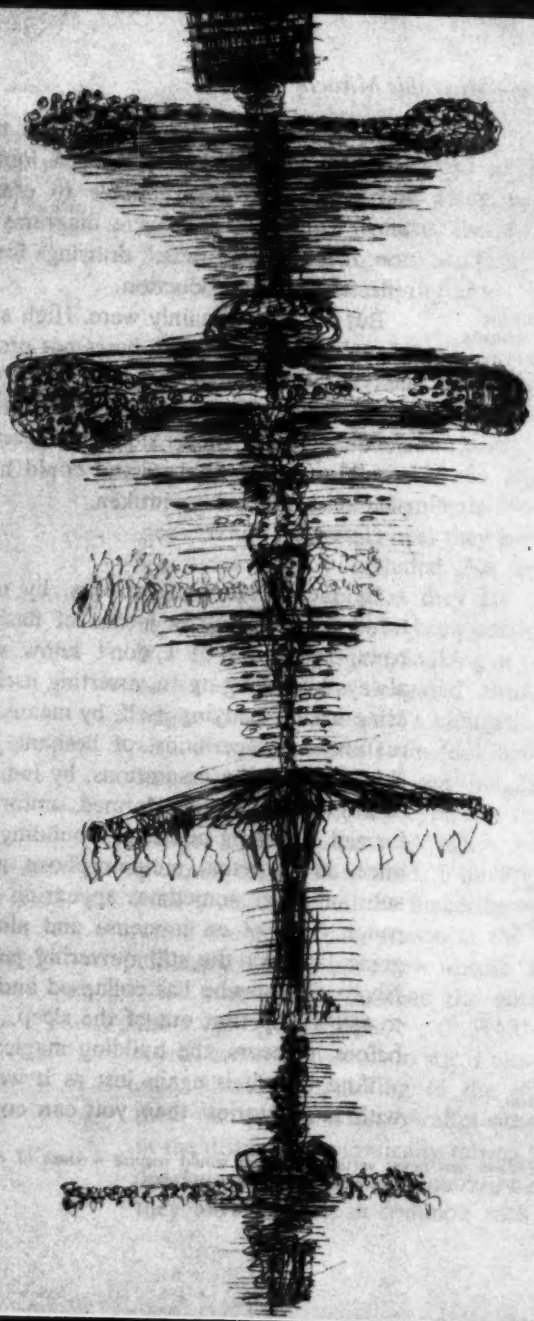
consolidations dislocations consolidations dislocations

By means of zigzag strokes, by means of transversal flights, by means of flashing furrows, by means of I don't know what all, always beginning again, asserting itself, recovering itself, steadying itself, by means of punctuations, of repetitions, of hesitant jerks, by slow cantings, by fissurations, by indiscernible slidings, I see, being formed, unformed, reformed, a jerking building, a building in abeyance, in perpetual metamorphosis and transubstantiation, sometimes appearing to be the rough draft of an immense and almost orogenic tapir, or the still quivering *pagne* of a Negro dancer who has collapsed and is about to fall asleep. But out of the sleep, and even before it occurs, the building magically rises.

"Mescalin avoids form," Havelock Ellis.

And here it is again just as it was before, with more stories[7] than you can count, with

[7] Endless, but never vertiginous. That would require a sense of distance and depth I don't have, of which I am totally lacking.



a thousand rows of spasmodic bricks, a trembling, oscillating ruin, crammed, stuttering *Bouroubodour*.

Once more besieged by pink licked by pink.

Like the sensitive tip of the tongue at the height of its enjoyment, if this tip of the tongue became instantaneously a big, fat pink hippopotamus replete with that enjoyment, and not only one, but a hundred big-bellied hippos, and ten thousand sows, suckling already biggish little pigs snuggling against their swollen flanks, and all this huddled together one against the other, and if the height of the enjoyment, thus spread out and multiplied, were solely the fact of being pink, pink, pink, stupidly, deliriously, paradisiacally pink, pink enough to make you howl, unless, that is, you had the soul of a whore and took a flabby pleasure in yielding to it, that was the way I was seeing pink, I was up to my eyes in pink, pink besieged me, licked me, wanted to confound me with itself. But I refused to fall for it. I'd have been ashamed.

A sort of perversion applied to a color

Last signs of speed.

the immense endless belt of faces

From island to island, greater and greater slackening. Softening too. For the first time a face appears, if it is a face. Two or three hundred alternate rows of eyes and lips, blubber lips that is, blubber lips, blubber lips, blubber lips, and eyes slightly mongoloid, eyes, eyes, eyes, eyes, composed the face which kept gliding ceaselessly downward, each lower row disappearing, replaced by other rows appearing, of slanting eyes, of slanting eyes, of slanting eyes, or of great blubber lips, blubber lips

with fleshy ridges like a rooster's comb, but not nearly so red. And they were indecipherable, the eyes, very narrow under immense heavy lids, slightly tremulous. And all this enormously rectangular, in fact like a moving carpet with the thickness and volume totally imperceptible, or rather seeming to be of the same thickness all over, the thickness of a comfortable carpet in which the eyes and lips were not so much in relief as excrescences, wasps, bellies, innumerable bellies, pinned there and still quivering. And the endless belt kept on rolling with its enigmatic eyes, and you couldn't decide which one to watch more than another. There was a slight incline, and the width of the face that kept sliding by was that of a moderately wide street, its height in proportion. A curious thing about it was that you had no more difficulty seeing the top than the bottom or the middle. And this great intent face, so exaggerated and devoid of any other part, visibly incapable of detaching itself from the others, I was able to watch without fear and even without repugnance. I felt hardly any curiosity either. Like the other spectacles, it did not seem to be there for me. Mescalin, soon to be spent, had now become more subdued. If the faces, when I try to describe them, seem monstrous, they really were not, being without any apparent expression. The colors showed hundreds of different tints and the subtle tones of autumn woods and forests. Instead of a carpet it might also have been a landscape or a mountain of faces. It was simply that they were juxtaposed and their

parallelism more mechanical than deliberate. Obviously mescalin did not know how to compose. I believe that the superabundance of colors which covered the entire space and refused to be suppressed disturbed both of us, mescalin and me. What was lacking in this huge spectacle was a gravity in proportion to its apparent extent. Immense without grandeur. Everything was growing indistinct. The storm of white lights was over and would not return.

The anopodokotolotopadnodrome was about to close.

J. P. in five words expressed what each of us was thinking. "One isn't proud of oneself." Not one of the three of us who were there had regarded it with reverence, but rather as a sort of prestidigitator's act. And we rose with the joyous sensation of having come from the ruin of a glassworks for which no one would hold us responsible.[8]

However, it was not all over as I had thought. Late in the evening, my head once more wrapped in a scarf, protected from the light of the lamp, I began seeing images again, certainly more colorful than any I was capable of myself. More blurred than they had been earlier, fainter yet characteristic—*mescalin's*, not *mine*.

[8] Several colors had been entirely absent for hours, as for example red, although red is a color I use frequently. On the other hand, green which I never use was, with white, violently present and in superabundance. Theory of Ewald Herling *(Theorie der Vorgänge, 1890)* according to which, if I am not mistaken, in drunkenness one sees only colors fitting the mood to the exclusion of all others. On the contrary, I was against most of mescalin's colors. They made me ashamed or furious.

Delicacy of the degradations.

Miraculous attenuations.

All evening I followed with delight the delicacy of this progressive decline. In slow imperceptible degradations, the images now passing so slowly as to become pictures, but still enormous (notably a rug, and a beautiful one, as large as the Place de la Concorde), underwent an attenuation of coloring, in the end becoming lovely and "human," an attenuation of such delicacy I felt I should like to share it with some one. . . . This attentuated tone, a marvel of extreme tenuousness, at the very limit of perceptibility, seen half an hour later had undergone a new infinitesimal softening, final caress of the stranger who was leaving, and thus, through diminishing and subtly moving stages, the visions became memory images. There was a point at which they were no longer ordinary apparitions, at which everything was memory. You couldn't tell. You were always making mistakes, or you saw that previously you had been mistaken, so exact the superimposition always became. Images and memory images always eventually coinciding, something which never happens except at this stage. Time passed in the contemplation of these minute details. Now and then magnificent greens returned. I was never altogether asleep.

Thus the night wore on, shot through from time to time by wonderful images.

THIRD EXPERIMENT

The very "little deaths" of mescalin from which one is constantly being resuscitated.

If a person should become addicted to mescalin—but it is more apt to frighten any one ("Grant that we do not go mad," was the prayer of Mexicans who, after fasting and con-

tinence, sought the god of the Peyotl)—it would certainly be for the periodic and ineffable shipwrecks one experiences. The exhaustion that follows the act of love is sometimes called the "little death." Compared to it, the extremely little death of mescalin is like the little death compared to the Great Death, so discreet it is, and gentle, but one suffers hundreds of them in the course of the day.

to the mad motions of the disappearing images the body periodically responds with a slow, solemn rhythm, the four-minute rhythm. (Approximate time not sufficiently verified.)

You go from little death to little death for hours on end, from shipwreck to rescue, succumbing every three or four minutes without the least apprehension, only to be gently, marvelously resuscitated once more. A deep sigh, which speaks volumes to those who know, is the only intimation of new rescues, but the voyage continues, a new death is preparing from which you will emerge in the same way. It is as though you had another heart whose systole and diastole occurred fifteen or twenty times an hour. Meanwhile, real or not, the indefatigable organ renews its strength and its drama and, though already weary, you are forced to take part until, at the fourth minute of the cycle, you give a sigh of relief which marks the end of the abstract coition.

And so it was with me the last time I delivered up my body and the tool that is called my head. It was also the time of the fracture, the gaping fracture, gaping for a long time perhaps, just as, in the case of a woman you have possessed while remaining detached, it happens that without thinking, or through a feeling of tenderness, graver by far than love, one day you surrender yourself, and she enters

you with the swiftness of a torrent and never to leave again.

open to it this time, willing to be open.

And so that day was the day of the great opening. Forgetting the tawdry images which as a matter of fact all disappeared, I gave up struggling and let myself be traversed by the fluid which, entering me through the furrow, seemed to be coming from the ends of the earth. I myself was torrent, I was drowned man, I was navigation. My hall of the constitution, my hall of the ambassadors, my hall of gifts and of the interchange of gifts, to which the stranger is brought to me for a first inspection; I had lost them all, my halls and my retainers. I was alone, tumultuously shaken like a dirty thread in an energetic wash. I shone, I was shattered, I shouted to the ends of the earth. I shivered, my shivering was a barking. I pressed forward, I rushed down, I plunged into transparency, I lived crystallinely.

at the right the celestial stairway.

Sometimes a glass stairway, a stairway like a Jacob's ladder, a stairway with more steps than I could climb in three entire lifetimes, a stairway with ten million steps, a stairway without landings, a stairway up to the sky, the maddest, most monstrous venture since the Tower of Babel, rose into the absolute. Suddenly, I didn't see it any longer. The stairway had vanished like the bubbles of champagne, and I continued my navigation, struggling not to roll, struggling against suctions and pullings, against infinitely small jumping things, against waiting webs and arching claws.

At times thousands of little ambulacral ten-

a gigantic starfish

tacles of a gigantic starfish fastened to me so compactly that I could not tell if I was becoming the starfish or if the starfish had become me. I shrank into myself, I made myself watertight and contracted, but everything here that contracts must promptly relax again, even the enemy dissolves like salt in water, and once more I was navigation, navigation first of all, shining with a pure white flame, responding to a thousand cascades, to foaming trenches and to gyratory gougings. What flows cannot inhabit.

Streamings streamings.

The streamings that on this extraordinary day were something so immense, so unforgettable, unique, that I thought, that I never stopped thinking: "A mountain, in spite of its lack of intelligence, a mountain with its cascades, its ravines, its streaming slopes would be in the same state I am in now and better able to understand me than a man. . . ."

What you see when you keep your eyes open.

the colors of the very weak inner vision combine with those of perception to produce exquisite tones.

Many *peyotleros,* probably but little accustomed to dreaming, have no visions, or at least not visions strong enough to be interesting, and prefer to keep their eyes open and to observe the altogether novel, the iridescent and, as it were, vibrant beauty of familiar objects, especially the dullest ones, for they are improved the most, becoming really quite marvelous (in tone).

As for me, in the very dim light, curtains drawn, blinds half closed, I noticed very little difference in the things around me, except that I could not fix their positions exactly. The distance from me to the walls, especially to the opposite wall, was no longer always the same.

Distances uncertain.

It wavered from being three meters away to three meters, fifty centimeters. It could not seem to make up its mind. But to this I had paid little attention, either because I found it hardly different from what I had experienced during a severe bout of fever, or because, as the sensation was rather disagreeable, I kept my eyes closed, interested only in the visions.

Meanwhile I had to get up to put a log on the fire. The noise seemed so formidable that I apologized to my companions for the earthquake I had provoked. They laughed in such a spontaneous and wholehearted manner that I realized their ears, made supersensitive like mine by mescalin, had heard the same unprecedented din. I went on into the next room where the light hurt my eyes. Then I opened the door into the bathroom and turned on the switch. I stood aghast at what I saw in the washbasin: a foetus! I was utterly dumbfounded. It is true that a woman had been there a short time before, a woman I hardly knew, but who seemed so proper. It was unbelievable! I couldn't get over it! She had stayed there for a considerable length of time —I remembered it now—but still, a woman as modest as she seemed!

An accident evidently. The effect of the emotional shock, the traumatism of the drug. Fascinated, I stood stock-still staring at it. I am not very active by nature. But I really had to find out if the foetus was whole, otherwise, poor woman, her suffering was not over. She would come back. That is why she had been suddenly so perturbed. Something had to be

done. With a feeling of disgust I touched the soft bluish head of the sticky blood-stained little thing. What a mess! Whole or not whole? Finally, with a stick I found in one corner, I begin energetically shoving the little body back and forth . . . it opens and falls apart. "Ah!" and I stand there overwhelmed as by another anomaly. The foetus no longer existed, yet it was still there, livid, bluish, blood-stained, such really delicate tones, almost iridescent, but which I failed to appreciate. . . . On the contrary, I was appalled. And what of the proof furnished by tearing it apart? No doubt, but the existence of the foetus, perfectly distinct and indubitable a few seconds ago, refused to be suppressed by the appearance, providential though it was, of this sort of rag or wet paper. I was still aghast. True, the case of the foetus seemed settled, but I had a vague feeling that if I were to discover another foetus, or worse, in a basin, in a sink, or in an empty flower pot, it might not be explained away so happily and unexpectedly as at present. My behavior was not as childish as it appears. Feeling that I was in no state to resist the hallucination and preferring not to remain exposed to it, I quickly returned to the dim living room, where queer colored visions did indeed come, and would come again, in my inner vision, but no foetus, nothing resembling a foetus, nothing really dangerous. I was not worried on that score. Why? It would be hard to say. Perhaps because in the real world, as far as women, domestic animals, even turtles are concerned, I am always afraid

fleeing from the hallucination.

of the consequences. Not very practical, I am afraid of anything that might become "material" and demand quick, rational decisions, of being caught unprepared. All this was evident, if not materialized, in this incident which as a matter of fact was not a true hallucination since it did not occur without some support. But it has taught me more than dozens of pages on the subject, for it has made me realize how one could remain riveted to a hallucination, unable to tear oneself away. As for a supporting agent, one can always be found. What surface is so smooth as not to show enough variations for the imagination to seize upon? What atmosphere so free from particles of dust that there is not one to catch and hold a chimerical object?

I used to have a kind of respect for people who saw apparitions. No longer! I have no doubt they really see them, but in what state of mind! Certainly not when they are calm, for then they would indeed be extraordinary.

Everything moves, everything is vibrant and teeming with reality to the eye and the mind of anyone who is in the second state . . . or who has been.

One evening about three weeks after my last dose of mescalin, I decided to read Quercy on hallucination after going to bed. Later, trying to toss the book onto the couch and aiming badly, it fell to the floor and, opening, revealed a wonderful colored photograph inserted in the volume. I hastened to recover the book. I wanted to see those marvelous colors again and to find out the name of the painter

of the original of the reproduction which I had barely glimpsed, but which I should recognize among all others. I turn over the pages: nothing. I shake the volume trying to make the loose page fall out. Impossible. I go over the book once more page by page, and again the next morning, even getting a friend to examine it too: nothing.

At the word "hallucination" I had had one.

Seeing the word on the cover I had functioned. Quick as thought it was realized. But not understanding, I had kept searching in vain for the admirable colored reproduction, more real than a real one, among the colorless pages of the book which had provoked it.

MICHAEL HAMBURGER: Georg Büchner

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Genius is an unfashionable word; and in attributing genius to Büchner I am aware that the word may call for qualification, if not for a redefinition which I am reluctant to attempt. As often as not, to speak of genius may be the last resort of a critic unequal to his subject, for genius is more easily discovered than analyzed, more easily measured than located, being a sort of phlogiston whose existence in human minds and their products can be neither proved nor disproved by empirical means. The analogy, of course, is only partly apt, like every analogy between the methods of criticism and the methods of scientific research. No work of art can be analyzed or assessed with a degree of accuracy comparable to that obtained in chemical experiments. One critical method may be more "objective" or more rewarding than another, but none is infallible. Unlike the universal ciphers of mathematics, the terminology of literary criticism is capable of no precision other than that which results from an understanding between the critic and his reader.

What is meant by genius here can be best conveyed by stating that even after one has adduced evidence of Büchner's extraordinary talents and accomplishments, as a scientist, political thinker and imaginative writer, as a moralist, psychologist and visionary there remains a residue of the inexplicable. His skill as a dramatist, to cite an example more verifiable than most, seems to have been acquired without the usual process of trial and error; and more generally one can say that Büchner's achievements demanded an incommensurable minimum of experience. Often, in his case, one looks in vain for the case behind the effect; there is a difference between the mere aggregate of his talents and their totality. For this difference there is no single word but genius.

As German literature suggests all too frequently, genius can exist without the various talents that make it viable; but Büchner's capacity for sheer hard work was no less extraordinary than his genius. He had little of the arrogance of the very gifted, and none of their vanity. Before the end of his short life he had attained a maturity rare enough in artists three times his age. When he died at the age of 23, he was a doctor of philosophy and a lecturer in comparative anatomy at the University of Zürich; a former political revolutionary who had been formidable enough to be driven into exile from his native Hessen by the imminent danger of a prison sentence; and the author of those four literary works—three plays and a story—to which he owes his belated fame. The manuscript of a fourth play, *Pietro Aretino,* which his family regarded as his best, was lost or destroyed after his death. He had published a more than competent translation of two dramas by Victor Hugo and written a thesis in French on *le système nerveux du barbeau;* this thesis was followed by a paper on the cranial nerves, the subject of his trial lecture at Zürich. His notes for a projected course of lectures on the history of German philosophy after Descartes and Spinoza, prepared during the last months of his life, include some penetrating and original comments on the subject. It is no exaggeration to say that Büchner excelled at every activity to which he applied himself.

To Büchner's talents and outlook, but not to his genius, his family background is relevant. His father, paternal grandfather, and an uncle on his father's side were medical men; so was his favorite brother Ludwig, the first editor of Georg's posthumous works and himself the author of *Force and Matter, Man and His Place in Nature,* and *Mind in Animals,* important studies in evolution and animal psychology that were popularized in England by Annie Besant. Of Georg's other brothers and sisters, Wilhelm became a research chemist and Reichstag deputy, Alexander a professor of literature in

France, Louise a writer in the feminist cause. Although Büchner's father disapproved of Georg's political activities, which were a grave embarrassment to a family enlightened and progressive rather than revolutionary, he was not unsympathetic to the convictions that gave rise to these activities and made his peace with Georg by letter a few months before Georg died in exile. It is also worth noting that the uncle to whom Georg turned when he was in trouble—Eduard Reuss, a brother of Georg's mother—was a Protestant theologian.

It was his meeting with another Protestant theologian, Pastor Weidig, that introduced Büchner to revolutionary politics. After attending school at Darmstadt, Georg Büchner studied the natural sciences—chiefly zoology and comparative anatomy—at Strasbourg, where he became secretly engaged to a pastor's daughter, Wilhelmine Jaegle, who had looked after him when he was ill in her father's house. In October 1833, at the age of twenty, he moved to the University of Giessen, took up practical medicine at his father's request, but had to return home in the spring after a more serious illness, an attack of meningitis that left him subject to headaches and fevers for the rest of his life. Back in Giessen after his convalescence, he met Pastor Weidig, the leader of the Liberal movement in Hessen. Büchner joined the "Society for the Right of Man" and, in collaboration with Pastor Weidig, wrote and published an anonymous tract, *Der Hessische Landbote,* which called on the peasants to revolt. Büchner contributed facts about the exploitation of the peasants, Weidig the main body of the tract, evangelical exhortations based on quotations from the Bible. In April 1834 Büchner returned to Strasbourg and announced his engagement to Minna Jaegle. During the Easter vacation he founded a branch of the society at Darmstadt and, in July, attended a conference of delegates from the various branches; but he had already lost faith in mere Liberal reform, deciding that nothing less than a revolution would prove effective in Germany. On August 1 the

stock of the *Landbote* was seized by the government; one of Büchner's associates was arrested and Büchner himself interrogated. For the time being, he continued his studies at home, also giving public lectures on anatomy, but secretly prepared his escape. In order to raise money for his escape, he wrote his first drama, *Dantons Tod,* and undertook the translations from Hugo; Karl Gutzkow, the leader of the "Young Germany" movement, saw to the publication of both books. Soon after getting away to Strasbourg in March 1835, Büchner was denounced for his part in the authorship of the *Landbote;* in June a warrant was issued for his arrest. *Dantons Tod* and Büchner's letters suggest that he had already grown tired of political action; at Strasbourg he wrote his French thesis, which won him admission to the *Societé d'Histoire Naturelle,* his story *Lenz* and his comedy *Leonce und Lena* (which he wrote, but submitted too late, for a competition). In September 1836 he was granted a Dr. Phil. degree by the University of Zürich and, after reading his paper on the cranial nerves, was appointed a lecturer there. Three months later, in February 1837, he contracted typhus and died in Zürich on February 19.

Dantons Tod was first performed in 1902, *Leonce und Lena* in 1911, *Woyzeck* in 1913. Büchner, in fact, was too "advanced" a dramatist to be acceptable even during the Naturalist eighties and nineties, when Ibsen, Hauptmann and Sudermann dominated the German experimental theatres. Gerhart Hauptmann admired Büchner's works, editions of which had been published in 1850 and 1879; but it was not till after the experiments of Strindberg, Wedekind and the first Expressionists that Büchner's plays established themselves on the stage. This very circumstance serves to confute the arguments of Professor Georg von Lukàcz and other critics of his school, who would like to persuade us that Büchner was an early practician of "Social Realism," of an art primarily directed towards social or political ends. For a time, undoubt-

edly, Büchner's preoccuption with human suffering caused him to seek relief in political action, for tyranny and injustice were two obvious causes of human suffering in his time; but only a very prejudiced reader of his works, from *Dantons Tod* to *Woyzeck*, can fail to see that Büchner's realism goes far deeper than that of the Naturalists and their successors, the Social Realists of this century. Büchner's view of life was a tragic one; his intense pity for the poor, the oppressed and the exploited was never alleviated by the comfortable belief that human suffering is due to no other causes than poverty, oppression and exploitation. If Büchner had wished to glorify the French Revolution or the ideology behind it, he would have made Robespierre the hero of his play, not the irresolute and dissolute Danton; but Büchner's dominant passion was the passion for truth, for the whole truth; and even if he had taken Robespierre as the hero of his play, it would have been Robespierre at the moment of his fall, the victim of the same inhuman system that had brought about Danton's death. Büchner, in short, was never a party man; he was never purblind, as every party man must be, because he hated ideologies that enslave the minds of men as much as he hated the economic and social orders that enslave men bodily. As a scientist, he knew that body and mind are interdependent; he therefore revolted against the "idealistic" cant that denies or minimizes the extent to which material conditions affect us. Yet his true concern was with mental and spiritual suffering. Danton's vision of vanity and his fear of death, the religious torment of Lenz, the suicidal boredom of Leonce, the physical victimization of Woyzeck that leads to hallucination, paranoia and murder. Büchner's realism was that of every great writer who seeks the truth about the human situation; a realism that is not incompatible with poetic vision.

I have said elsewhere that, in the age of Hegelian dialectics, it was often the self-contradictions of a writer that revealed

his vital preoccupations. Büchner, too, wrote out of a tragic tension between two conflicting views of life. What is so astonishing about his works is their consistency of purpose and achievement. One reason is that Büchner had no use at all for Hegel or for that idealistic German school from which Hegel derived. Büchner had no patience with half-measures; like Schopenhauer, whom he resembled in his pessimism and in his pity, he based his thinking not on metaphysical premises, but on the bare condition of man, on the reality of suffering, our participation in suffering not our own and our desire to relieve it. This basic existential preoccupation is at the root of all Büchner's works; but he was divided between a religious view of the human predicament and a cruelly deterministic view, brought home to him by his scientific studies and his reflections on history.

An early letter to his fiancée, written when he was twenty, contains a most poignant account of these conflicting views. The account is especially valuable because of its direct bearing on Büchner's first play, *Dantons Tod*. There can be no better introduction to it than Büchner's own reflections on the events with which it deals:

> I was studying the history of the French Revolution. I felt almost annihilated by the horrible fatalism of history. In human nature I discovered a terrifying sameness, in human institutions an incontrovertible power, granted to all and to none. The individual mere froth on the wave, greatness a mere accident, the sovereignty of genius a mere puppet play, a ludicrous struggle against an inalterable law; to recognize this law our supreme achievement, to control it impossible. . . .

It was this experience of determinism that turned Büchner into a revolutionary of the most radical sort, as the same letter shows. It is the extremists of revolutionary politics, the Robespierres rather than the Dantons, who base their policies on the recognition of that "unalterable law." Yet the recognition ran counter to Büchner's nature and convictions, to his

Christian sense of the value of the individual and his no less radical belief in free will. Hence the conflicting resolutions that follow:

. . . Never again shall I feel obliged to bow to the parade horses and corner boys of History. I am accustoming my eyes to the sight of blood. But I am no guillotine blade. The word *must* is one of the curses pronounced at the baptism of men. The dictum: "for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!"—is terrible. What is it in us that lies, murders, steals? I can't bear to pursue this thought any further. But oh! if I could lay this cold and tormented heart on your breast!

The relevance of this passage to *Dantons Tod* would be obvious even if Büchner had not put much of it into Danton's own mouth in Act II of the play. The conflict between Robespierre and St. Just on the one hand, Danton and his friends on the other, is a conflict between two different views of political and historical necessity. Their dramatic conflict would be less convincing if Büchner had not been able to do full justice to both arguments. At one time, there can be no doubt, he would have identified himself with the party of Robespierre and St. Just. Not only Danton expresses thoughts that we know to have been Büchner's; St. Just's great speech in Act II is an apology for the very determinism that Büchner had come close to accepting:

Nature calmly and irresistibly obeys her own laws; men are annihilated where they come into conflict with those laws. A change in the constitution of the air we breathe, a blazing up of the tellurian fire, a volcanic eruption, a flood—each of these can cause the death of thousands. What is the result? An insignificant alteration of physical nature, hardly perceptible in the cosmos as a whole, that would have left no trace to speak of but for the dead bodies left in its wake.

Now I ask you: should mental nature show more consideration in its revolutions than physical nature? Should not an idea have as much right as a physical law to destroy whatever opposes it? Indeed, should not any event that will change the entire constitution of moral nature, that is, of humanity, be permitted to attain its end by bloodshed? The World Spirit makes use of our arms in the mental sphere as it makes

use of volcanoes and floods in the physical. What difference does it make whether men die of an epidemic or of a revolution?

The appeal to Hegel's "World Spirit" in this context may be an anachronism, but it is a significant one. Büchner was careful to grant both factions their fair share of religious or pseudo-religious justification. Elsewhere Robespierre compares his mission to that of Christ:

> He redeemed them with his blood, and I redeem them with their own. He made them sin, and I take this sin upon myself . . . And yet . . . Truly, the son of man is crucified in us all, we all sweat blood and writhe in the garden of Gethsemane, but no one redeems another with his wounds.

Dramatically, this passage serves to show that Robespierre too has scruples and affections, for he is moved to express these thoughts by Camille Desmoulins's desertion to Danton's party. Robespierre, who denies his scruples and affections in favor of impersonal ends, is no less deserving of pity than his victim, the individualist. But Büchner takes dramatic impartiality even further by throwing just a little shadow of doubt on the purity of Robespierre's motives, as indeed he suggests several possible explanations for the conduct of Danton himself. That is why *Dantons Tod* is a truly and profoundly tragic play; both Robespierre, who serves a certain ideal necessity, and Danton, who opposes it in the cause of individual freedom, are destroyed by the Revolution, though Robespierre first destroys Danton for the Revolution's sake. The Revolution itself assumes a character akin to that of Fate in Greek tragedy; and the voice of the people —*vox populi, vox dei*—expresses a terrible indifference to the virtues and aspirations of both men. Yet amoral and brutish though they are, even the representatives of the people are not excluded from the pity which Büchner's play so powerfully evokes.

Danton's disillusionment, too, is Büchner's own. One can follow the process in the few letters and parts of letters by

Büchner that have been preserved. In a letter to his family, written when he was nineteen, he defended the use of violence in the revolutionary cause, on the grounds that the so-called laws of the land are nothing more than "a perpetual state of violence" imposed on the suffering people. A year later he could still express his hatred of the aristocracy, or rather of an attitude of mind which he called "aristocratism," describing it "as the most shameful contempt for the Holy Ghost in Man; against this I fight with its own weapons, repaying scorn with scorn, mockery with mockery." The turning point came when certain of the peasants, for whose sake Büchner was risking imprisonment by his part in the authorship of the *Hessische Landbote,* handed over their copies to the police. Büchner was no less critical than before of the bourgeois intellectual reformers, the Young Germans, who did not share his own conviction that "the relation between rich and poor is the only revolutionary factor in the world," as he put it to Karl Gutzkow in 1835; but he had come to fear that the servility of the German working class would frustrate every effort on their behalf. In a later letter to Gutzkow he added a second "revolutionary factor." "With them [the working class], only two levers are effective: material misery and religious fanaticism. Any party that knows how to apply those levers will be victorious." By 1836, Büchner had renounced every kind of political activity; but it must not be supposed that he had made his peace with the existing social order. His quarrel with "the literary party of Gutzkow and Heine" was simply that they were wasting their time and energy in trying to bring about "a total transformation of our religious and social ideas by polemical journalism"; and he was "far from sharing their views on marriage and on the Christian religion." Büchner remained a radical and an extremist; not because he clung to any rigid political doctrine, but because he believed that "in social matters one must start out with an absolute principle of justice." His own starting point was compassion with the

poor; and that is why he stressed the economic basis of injustice in his time. A letter of 1836 to his family ends with a brief account of his visit to a Christmas fair, with its crowds of "ragged, frozen children, who stood gazing with wide eyes and sad faces at all that magnificence, made out of flour and water, gilt paper and muck."

As for our "moribund modern society," he told Gutzkow in 1836 not to waste his talent on literary sallies against it, but to "let it go to the devil" in its own time. "Its whole life only consists in attempts to ward off the most horrible boredom. Let it die out, then, for that's the only new thing it's still capable of experiencing."

Strange, but all Büchner's heroes suffer from different forms of that very boredom—a profound boredom that saps their will power, sometimes their very desire to live. If this boredom were no more than a late variety of the Romantic *mal du siècle*, we might indeed regard it as the attribute of a single social class, of a ruling class in decline, as Büchner's letter seems to imply. The boredom of Leonce could easily pass for the mere languor of enforced idleness; and it is the seemingly innocent, pseudo-Romantic comedy *Leonce und Lena* that contains some of Büchner's most devastating political satire. "My Muse is a Samson in disguise," he wrote to Gutzkow; but of all his works only *Leonce und Lena* makes its revolutionary impact by indirect means, by imitation and parody of current literary conventions. Since Leonce is a Prince, one might argue, and a particularly idle and useless one at that, Büchner used him to satirize the idleness and uselessness of the ruling class; and since boredom results from idleness and uselessness, Büchner saw to it that Leonce should be bored to the point of trying to kill himself. This is the kind of argument put forward by the advocates of Social Realism; like most of their arguments, it is logical, but wholly specious.

Leonce himself is a rebel; his boredom is not the result of

idleness and uselessness, but of his awareness that he is idle and useless. This awareness, as we shall see, has deeper implications than the social and political ones. Leonce not only questions his own function in the State—a function which, in any case, he is not prepared to perform—but doubts the value and purpose of human life itself. Romantic languor is the mood evoked at the beginning of his monologue in the first scene of the play; yet this languor soon gives way to reflections that have no place in the Romantic convention:

> The bees cling so drowsily to the flowers, the sun's rays lie so lazily on the ground. A horrible idleness is spreading everywhere. Idleness is the root of every vice.—Just to think of all the things that people do out of boredom! They study out of boredom, they pray out of boredom, they fall in love out of boredom, marry and procreate out of boredom and finally die of it; what's more—and that's what makes the whole thing so funny—they do it all with such a solemn expression on their faces, not knowing why they do it, but attaching all sorts of weighty reasons to their pastimes. All these heroes, geniuses and blockheads, all these saints and sinners and family men are really nothing more than sophisticated idlers.—Why, of all people, do *I* have to know it? Why can't I become important to myself, dress the poor puppet in a morning coat and put an umbrella in its hand, so as to make it very righteous, very useful and very respectable?

The allusion to a puppet in this passage—the significance of Büchner's obsession with puppets and robots has already been intimated—relates the boredom of Leonce to Büchner's own vision of vanity. Leonce thinks human endeavors vain because they are predetermined; he rebels against this determinism by refusing to marry the Princess for reasons of state, runs away from the knigdom, meets the same Princess without knowing it, falls in love with her and marries her of his own free will. Valerio sums up the grotesque irony of this plot when he presents the returning prodigals to the court as "two world-famous automatons":

> Ladies and gentlemen, you have here two persons of either sex, a male and a female, a gentleman and a lady. Nothing but artifice

and mechanisms, nothing but cardboard and watch springs! Each of them has a highly sensitive, exceedingly sensitive ruby spring under the nail of the little toe of the right foot; you press it ever so lightly and the machinery runs for no less than fifty years. These persons are of such perfect workmanship that they would be quite indistinguishable from other people if one didn't know that they're only cardboard; they could easily be turned into members of human society. They're very aristocratic too, for they speak with the right accent. They're very moral, for they get up on the stroke of the clock and go to bed on the stroke of the clock; also, they have a good digestion, which proves they've got a clear conscience. They have a fine sense of decency, for the lady has no words for the concept of trousers, and, as for the man, it's quite impossible for him to walk upstairs behind a lady or walk downstairs in front of one. They're highly educated, for the lady sings extracts from all the latest operas and the gentleman wears cuffs.—Attention, ladies and gentlemen, they're now at an interesting stage: the mechanism of love is beginning to function; the gentleman has already once carried the lady's wrap, the lady has already once rolled her eyes and raised them to heaven. Both have whispered more than once: faith, hope and charity! Both already look perfectly synchronized; they need nothing more, but the tiny word "Amen."

For all its whimsical humor, the implications of *Leonce und Lena* are no less terrifying than those of *Woyzeck*, in which a performing horse replaces the automatons of *Leonce und Lena;* both are cruel comments on the illusion of freedom and the pretensions of *homo sapiens*. The boredom of Leonce, then, is more than his response to the rottenness of a social system; it is the aftereffect of that experience of the abyss in which all Büchner's principal characters participate.

Danton's boredom has the same origin; but in his case there can be no question of a mere indictment on social or political grounds. To understand his boredom, we should rather consider Baudelaire's *Ennui*, which

> *ferait volontiers de la terre un débris*
> *Et dans un bâillement avalerait le monde*

and Yeats' bitter comment, true of more than his own time, that

> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity.

In the case of Danton, boredom is not the result of idleness, but its cause; and behind this cause there is another, the demoralization induced by his experience of the abyss. In a certain sense one can say of his particular kind of boredom that it afflicts the best, because only those whose moral sense is highly developed are susceptible to demoralization from that cause; but, as Baudelaire knew, the cause does not excuse the effect. Danton is a morally ambiguous character because his boredom—the apathy that springs from despair—is itself a vice and the begettor of other vices.

Danton's apathy is bound up with an almost nihilistic scepticism about human motives. When, in the opening scene, his wife asks him whether he believes in her, he replies: "How can I tell? We know very little about one another. We are pachyderms, we reach out our hands towards others, but it's a wasted effort; all we rub off in that contact is a little of the callous hide;—we are very lonely." And again: "Know one another? Why, we should have to break open the other's cranium and pull his thoughts out of the fibers of his brain." Woyzeck's torment is even more extreme than Danton's; but it is out of the same experience that he says: "Every human being is an abyss; it makes you giddy to look down."

Danton's scepticism extends to his own motives. On the one hand he resists Robespierre's deterministic *"must"* in the cause of individual liberty; on the other, he questions his own free will in a speech that echoes Büchner's letter to his fiancée: "Puppets is what we are, puppets manipulated by unknown powers; nothing, nothing at all in ourselves; no more than the swords with which ghosts fight their battles—only one can't see their hands, as in fairy tales. . . ." Danton is morally superior to his enemies when he says of himself that he "would sooner be guillotined than condemn another to be guillotined";

but, in his passion for the whole truth, Büchner makes Danton's friend Lacroix say that Danton "would sooner be guillotined than make a speech," thus putting a very different construction on Danton's failure to defend himself and his friends. Both the imputed motives are valid. Danton is morally superior to his opponents in so far as he has experienced the abyss and acts in accordance with that experience; in so far as, having recognized its futility, he refuses to set in motion the murderous revolutionary machine, even to save his own skin. He is morally inferior to Robespierre and St. Just in so far as he lacks all conviction and has fallen into an apathy that takes the form of promiscuous debauchery. Büchner himself doesn't tell us—and doesn't expect us to decide—how far Danton's attitude of *laisser-faire* is due to genuine scruples, to remorse for his former part in the "liquidation" of others and to compassion with the people, who are fobbed off with severed heads and continue to go hungry; and how far it is due only to his *taedium vitae*, weariness and indifference. "I shall show them how to die bravely," he says to Camille; "that's easier than to go on living."

This *taedium vitae* comes out most clearly at the beginning of Act II. Camille tells Danton to hurry, for they can't afford to waste time; to which Danton replies:

> But time wastes us.
>
> Oh, it's very boring always to put on one's shirt first, and then pull one's trousers over it and go to bed at night and creep out of it in the morning and always be setting one foot before the other; there's simply no telling how this will ever change. It's very sad to think of it, and to think that millions have done it before you and that millions will do it again in exactly the same way, and that, moreover, we consist of two halves, both of which do the same thing, so that everything happens twice over—it's very sad. . . .

Camille tells him not to be childish and reminds him that he is ruining not only himself, but his friends as well. Danton refuses to act. He is tired, he says, of being "a wretched instrument, each of whose strings only sounds on one note." He is

even prepared to admit that Robespierre, "the dogma of the Revolution," as he calls him, may be indispensable, whereas he, Danton, is not. Danton has ceased to care; his experience of the abyss has stripped him of all but passive virtues and negative desires. "We should sit down one beside the other and have some peace. Something went wrong when we were created; there's something missing in us, I don't know what to call it—but we'll never pull it out of one another's entrails, so why rip open another fellow's belly to find it?"

Here Danton seems to point to something very much like original sin; but, if so, he doesn't recognize its corollary, free will. His tolerance rests on the denial of free will, just as much as Robespierre's intolerance does. The difference is one of emphasis. Robespierre is prepared to sacrifice any number of human beings to an ideal necessity, Danton to sacrifice every ideal to what he regards as the facts of the human condition. Danton's passive resistance to Robespierre's fanaticism would be heroic if Danton believed in heroism; as it is, he can only resist the tyranny of Robespierre's ideal necessity by appealing to a different necessity, based on the inborn corruption of human nature and its dependence on material factors. In the crowd scene of Act I, the citizen who defends an adultress against her husband's anger speaks in the spirit of Danton: "A knife? True enough, but not for the poor whore. What has she done? It's her hunger that whores and begs. . . ." Much more poignantly, Woyzeck resorts to the same argument in defending himself against the Captain's taunts: "As for virtue, sir, I haven't got the hang of it. You see, we common people haven't any virtue, we just let nature have its way; but if I was a gentleman and had a hat and a watch and a frock coat and could talk refined, I'd be virtuous in no time. It must be a fine thing—virtue, I mean, sir. But I'm a poor man."

Büchner would hardly have used this argument in two different plays if the moral problem had not concerned him

personally; but, because of its very ambiguity, the conflict between Danton and Robespierre is more than a conflict between two political factions, two temperaments or two views of life. It assumes the inevitability of a tragic dilemma, a dilemma that will recur as long as men disagree as to the relative value of ends and means; and since "there's something missing" in men, as Danton says, and they will always have to choose between one evil and another, *Dantons Tod* will never lose its appeal or its relevance.

It doesn't matter, therefore, that Büchner put his own conflicts, disillusionments and sufferings into his plays. His magnificent impartiality saves all his works from being mere illustrations of this or that idea. From external evidence it would seem that Büchner would have taken Danton's side against Robespierre, whose fanatical insistence on abstract virtues was repellent to him; but the play both exposes and pardons both men. Büchner's impartiality made all the difference between the didactic realism of the Young Germany group and his own poetic realism. "I shall go my own way," he wrote to Gutzkow in 1836, "and continue to write a kind of drama that has nothing to do with all these controversial issues. I draw my characters in accordance with nature and history, as I see them, and laugh at the people who would like to make me responsible for the morality or immorality of those characters. . . ."

This is not the attitude of a Social Realist before his time; nor, on the other hand, does it rest on the same foundations as Heine's arguments in favor of "art for art's sake." Heine took to this doctrine to defend his subjectivity. Büchner stumbled on beauty while he was looking for truth; and by truth he did not mean the writer's moods and caprices, but the facts of life. Being a man of genius, he soon found that the truth of literature includes subjective truth, the head, heart and imagination of men. In order to present the facts of human nature, he drew on his own experience of life; but always

for the sake of impersonal truth, never for the sake of self-expression.

When *Dantons Tod* was attacked for its obscenity, impiety and subversiveness, Büchner justified himself in a letter to his family:

> As regards the so-called immorality of my book, by the way, my answer is as follows: The dramatic poet, as I see it, is nothing but a writer of history, but is superior to the latter for this reason: that he re-creates history for us and, instead of giving us a dry account of it, places us right in the midst of the life of a particular period, gives us characters instead of characteristics and figures instead of descriptions. His supreme task is to get as close as possible to history as it really happened. His book must be neither more moral nor less moral than history itself; but God didn't create history to provide suitable reading matter for young females, and so I mustn't be blamed if my drama is no more suitable for that. How could I turn Danton and the bandits of the Revolution into paragons of virtue? If I wished to portray their dissoluteness, they had to be dissolute, if I wished to indicate their godlessness, they had to speak like atheists. . . . One could now censure me for having chosen such a subject. But this objection was refuted long ago. If one were to accept it, one would have to condemn the greatest masterpieces of literature. The poet is not a teacher of morals; he invents and creates characters, he brings past epochs back to life, and people may then learn from him as they learn from their historical studies and from their observation of all that happens around them in human life. . . . If one were then to add that the poet should not represent the world as it is, but as it should be, my answer is that I don't aspire to do better than God, who surely created the world as it should be. . . . In short, I think highly of Goethe or Shakespeare, very little of Schiller. . . .

If this apology for realism contains much that is generally accepted now, one should remember that Büchner was the contemporary not only of Dickens, but of Richard Wagner; and it is interesting to recall that in 1891 the editor of a Berlin newspaper was sentenced to four months' imprisonment for daring to reprint *Dantons Tod*—after more than half a century of Liberal reform!

Büchner's passion for realism was such that he based three out of his four extant imaginative works on documentary

evidence, much of which is quoted verbatim in his works. *Dantons Tod* was based on histories of the French Revolution by Thiers and Mignet, with other borrowings from a German work by Konrad Friedrich; *Lenz* on the diary of Pastor Oberlin, who looked after the poet and dramatist J. M. R. Lenz at the time of his mental breakdown in 1778; *Woyzeck* on reports of the trial and medical examination of a murderer of that name, who was almost reprieved on the grounds of insanity, but finally sentenced to death in 1824. But it would be quite wrong to regard these borrowings as a substitute for invention. What is so remarkable about all these works is their fusion of fact and imagination, verisimilitude and passion, made possible by Büchner's extraordinary gift of empathy. His Lenz, for instance, expresses a view of art almost identical with Büchner's own when he says:

> Even the poets of whom we say that they reproduce reality have no conception of what reality is, but they're a great deal more bearable than those who wish to transform reality. . . . I take it that God made the world as it should be and that we can hardly hope, scrawl or daub anything better; our only aspiration should be to re-create modestly in His manner. . . . In all things, I demand life, the possibility of existence, and that's all; nor is it our business to ask whether it's beautiful, whether it's ugly. The feeling that there's life in the thing created is much more important that considerations of beauty and ugliness. . . .

But Büchner was also expounding the views of the historical Lenz. He would never have chosen to write about Lenz at all but for his deep affinity with this unhappy writer of the *Sturm und Drang*. Lenz himself had written: "But since the world has no bridges and we have to content ourselves with the things that are there, we do at least feel an accretion to our existence, happiness, by re-creating its Creation on a small scale." Like Lenz and other writers of the *Sturm und Drang*, Büchner claimed literary descent from Shakespeare; like them too, he was anti-classical and anti-idealistic.

The anti-idealism of Büchner was a philosophical, as well as a literary and political, creed. His caricature of the metaphysical monarch, King Peter, in *Leonce und Lena,* makes the connection between idealism in philosophy and the tendency of the Germans to excuse every vicious practice on the grounds of their genuine devotion to abstract ideas. In place of the Divine Right once claimed by absolute rulers, Büchner's nineteenth-century monarch (of a kingdom whose frontiers can be surveyed from the palace windows!) resorts to Kant's philosophy to justify his absolute power. Not surprisingly, he finds the substitution awkward, as in the scene when his valets are dressing him:

> Men must think, and I have to think for my subjects, for they don't think at all.—The substance is the thing in itself, and that's me. [*He runs around the room, almost naked.*]
>
> Did you get that? *Per se* is the thing in itself, do you understand? Now we need my attributes, modifications, characteristics and accidences: where's my shirt? where are my trousers?—Stop! Shame on it! You've left my free will quite exposed in front. Where's my morality —where are my cuffs? The categories are in a shocking state of confusion: you've done up two buttons too many, you've put my snuff-box in the right-hand pocket: my whole system is ruined.—Ha, what's the meaning of this knot in my handkerchief? Hey there, fellow, what's the meaning of this knot? What was it I wanted to remember?

What King Peter wanted to remember—it turns out after a great deal of questioning and self-examination—is his people!

The identification of clothes with the categories of metaphysics in this passage is characteristic of Büchner. To the muddleheadedness and pretentiousness of King Peter he opposed the realism of "a naked thinking heart that makes no show." The philosophical basis of this realism can't be deduced with certainty from the imaginative works, but certain indications are common to them all.

All Büchner's major characters resemble him in rejecting every idealistic, *a priori* explanation of life; and, with the exception only of Robespierre and St. Just, they are no less

sceptical of rationalistic and mechanistic interpretations of nature, human and otherwise. This is the crux of Mercier's opposition to Robespierre's faction, and of Danton's too, if only Danton were not too demoralized to believe in his own assertion of the freedom to choose. Mercier says:

> Just pursue your cant for once to the point where it becomes concrete.—Just look around you and say: all this is what we've said; it's a mimed translation of your words. These wretches, their executioners and the guillotine are your speeches come to life. You built your systems as Bajazet built his pyramids, out of human heads.

On the same grounds, but in very cynical terms, Camille Desmoulins mocks Hérault for lapsing into noble rhetoric shortly before their execution:

> From the face he's making one would think it's going to be petrified and excavated by posterity as an ancient work of art.
>
> Go on, then, distort your mouth into pretty shapes, lay on the rouge and talk with a good accent, if you think it's worth the effort. I say we should take off our masks for once: as in a hall of mirrors, we'd see nothing anywhere but the primeval, toothless, indestructible sheep's head—no more, no less. The distinctions don't really amount to much; we're all of us scoundrels and angels, asses and geniuses, and, what's more, we're all these things in one: there's room enough in the same body for all four, they aren't as big as one likes to think. Sleep, digest, conceive children—that's what we all do; as for the other things, they're only variations in different keys on the self-same theme. So there's no need to stand on tip-toe and pull faces, no need to be bashful in company!

What these two speeches have in common is the desire of both speakers to get down to the very rock bottom of human nature; and this, beyond doubt, was also Büchner's desire. The difficulty only comes with the next step. What are the positive convictions that sustained the humanism implicit in all Büchner's works?

An answer is provided in one of his scientific works, his lecture on the cranial nerves. Büchner introduces the subject by making a crucial distinction between two different ap-

proaches to the study of natural phenomena; these he calls the "teleological" and the "philosophical." To the teleological view, "every organism is a complex machine, provided with the most ingenious means of preserving itself up to a certain point. It sees the cranium as an artificial vault supported by buttresses, devised to protect its occupant, the brain,—cheeks and lips as an apparatus for masticating and breathing,—the eye as an intricate glass,—the eyelids and lashes as its curtains;—even tears are only the drops of water that keep the eye moist. . . ." Büchner rejects this teleological view, and the scientific methods derived from it, as a vicious circle. His own view, the philosophical, as he calls it for lack of a better word, is that "nature does not act for specific ends, does not use itself up in an endless chain of cause and effect, each of which determines another; but in all its manifestations nature is immediately sufficient to itself. All that is, is for its own sake. To look for the law of this being is the aim of the view opposed to the teleological. . . . All that the former sees as a cause, the latter sees as an effect. Where the teleological school is ready with an answer, the question only begins for the philosophical school."

This lecture is a late work; and it may be wrong to suppose that Büchner had reached this philosophical conclusion when he was writing his imaginative works. The existential anguish of his characters would rather seem to be due to their horror of the mechanistic, "teleological" interpretation of life, which they are unable to resist as effectively as Büchner does in this profession of faith. And his "philosophical" view of nature—"ontological" would be a better designation—does amount to a profession of faith. It is a faith which nowadays we should call Existentialist.

But to stick this fashionable label on Büchner's work doesn't mean that one has placed it at all definitely. The existential preoccupation which was certainly Büchner's tells us no more than that he reached the point fixed long ago by Pascal when

he faced up to the alternative between God and *le néant*, and made his wager. Büchner's characters are familiar enough with the abyss, and *"abyssus invocoit abyssum."* We also know that Büchner believed his realism, his reverence for the world as it is, to be more compatible with religion than the idealism of those concerned with the world as it ought to be. But the Existentialists themselves have shown that Pascal's wager remains a wager, that one can choose the abyss and base the most weighty philosophies on Nothing.

In Act III of *Dantons Tod*, the imprisoned Girondists discuss religious faith; one of them, Thomas Payne, contributes a speech which runs counter to Büchner's historical sources. We can therefore take it that Büchner had a special reason for interpolating it. Thomas Payne says:

> Do away with all that's imperfect; only then you'll be able to prove the existence of God. Spinoza tried it. You can deny the reality of evil, but not the reality of pain; only reason can prove the existence of God, feeling revolts against it. Take note of this, Anaxagoras: why do I suffer? That is the rock of atheism. The faintest twitch of pain, though it were only within an atom, rends Creation from top to bottom.

It was on this rock that Büchner came to grief when he ceased to believe that political action is a panacea for human suffering. His experience of the abyss came with the discovery that many of our evils and afflictions are not only irremediable, but —so it seemed to him—inevitable, because they are brought about by forces beyond our control. Hence his horror of the determinism suggested to him by his historical studies. For a time, at any rate, his answer was atheism, but the atheism of revolt, not that of indifference. There is no more extraordinary description of a sudden religious conversion than Büchner's in *Lenz;* and this conversion is a conversion to atheism. It comes as the climax of protracted religious torment, heightened, but not disparaged for that reason, by the incipient madness of Lenz. Its immediate cause is the impotence of

compassion, the failure of Lenz' attempt to raise a child from the dead; for in the extremity of his pity for the dead child and his fervent faith in the goodness of God, Lenz thought himself capable of performing this miracle.

> . . . Then he rose and clasped the child's hands in his, and said loudly and earnestly: "Arise and walk!" But soberly the walls re-echoed his voice, as though to mock him, and the corpse remained cold. Half-mad, he collapsed on the floor; then terror seized him, he rushed out, and away into the mountains.
>
> Clouds were passing swiftly across the moon; now all was in darkness, now the nebulous, vanishing landscape was revealed in the moonlight. He ran up and down. In his breast Hell was rehearsing a song of triumph. The wind sounded like the singing of Titans. He felt capable of clenching an enormous fist, thrusting it up into Heaven, seizing God and dragging Him through His clouds; capable of crunching the world with his teeth and spitting it into the face of the Creator; he swore, he blasphemed. In this way he arrived at the highest point of the mountains, and the uncertain light stretched down towards the white masses of stone, and the heavens were a stupid blue eye, and the moon, quite ludicrous, idiotic, stood in the midst. Lenz had to laugh loudly, and as he laughed, atheism took root in him and possessed him utterly, steadily, calmly, relentlessly. He no longer knew what had moved him so much before, he felt cold; he thought he would like to go to bed now, and went his way through the uncanny darkness, cold and unshakable—all was empty and hollow to him, he was compelled to run home, and went to bed.

Woyzeck has the simple religious faith of the peasants in *Lenz;* yet, more than any other of Büchner's characters, he has to accommodate himself to the inevitability of evil. He endures the Captain's taunts of bestiality, the Doctor's experiments on his body, every humiliation, in fact, that society cared to inflict on him, with the patience of one who has accepted his status as an underdog. His faith remains intact. But when Marie deceives him, revealing the abyss of human nature, he is at the mercy of the "voices" that urge him to kill her. These voices are hallucinatory, products of a state of mind bordering on paranoia. Even his last desperate act, therefore, is not an assertion of free will. Woyzeck is a man who obeys orders,

even the "supernatural" order to destroy his only source of happiness and himself.

Faith, once again, comes to grief on the rock of suffering, at least as far as most audiences and readers are concerned; but *Woyzeck* is too fragmentary and too complex a play to permit more than conjectures as to Woyzeck's own state of mind at the end. What we can say with certainty is that Woyzeck is a good man, however primitive and unbalanced; and that Society—as represented by the Captain, the Doctor and the Policeman—is not the collective villain of Büchner's play, as some critics would like us to believe. The Captain is a good-natured fool, the Doctor—whose experiments have undermined Woyzeck's health—is a pernicious one; the Policeman's final comment ("A good murder, a genuine murder, a lovely murder!") merely proves that, like everyone else, he takes pride in his work. Suffering is the villain of *Woyzeck;* and society is one of its instruments.

The only direct moral drawn in *Woyzeck* is the Showman's comment when his learned horse relieves itself in the middle of its performance:

> All right then, put the public to shame. You see, ladies and gentlemen, the beast is still nature, unidealized nature. Learn from it! Ask your doctor, he'll tell you it's very harmful to do otherwise. What the horse meant to say was: man, be natural! You were created out of dust, sand and muck. Do you want to be more than dust, sand and muck?

Why did Büchner introduce a performing horse at all? One reason is that it corresponds to the "automatons" in *Leonce und Lena* and has the function, as the Showman says, of putting the public to shame, of purging us of those pretensions which would act as a barrier between Woyzeck and our sympathy. The parallel between Woyzeck's behavior and that of the horse is obvious; for previously the Doctor had reprimanded Woyzeck for relieving himself in public and depriving him of material for his experiment. On this occasion he had

lectured Woyzeck on free will, just as the Captain lectures him on "virtue," and Woyzeck had excused himself by saying that he was dependent on nature. But, being human, Woyzeck experiences nature very differently from the horse. He goes on to ask the Doctor whether he has "ever seen anything of the duality of nature" and tells him of his vision and "voices." The Doctor replies that Woyzeck "has the most lovely specimen of *aberration mentalis partialis,* of the second order, with beautifully clear symptoms."

Here *Woyzeck* links up with Büchner's profession of faith in his lecture on the cranial nerves. The Doctor is a representative of the "teleological" school, whose intellectual pretensions are a cover for the crudest materialism. The Showman's comment, then, is far from having the nihilistic implications which one might easily read into it. For we have to come to terms with the abyss. We have to strip ourselves of false values before we can even begin to grasp the true ones. This was the basis of Büchner's humanism, of a compassion with the suffering individual that broke down every barrier of circumstance, education and class. Having broken down these external barriers, Büchner—in *Lenz* and *Woyzeck*—went on to do something still more difficult: he penetrated the inward barrier of madness. In *Lenz* and *Woyzeck* we experience madness from the inside, by an identification made possible by Büchner's gift of compassion.

One other statement of Büchner's must be added here, though it has no place in his work. According to the diary kept by Caroline Schulz—who, together with her husband, Büchner's friend and fellow-exile, nursed him during his last illness—Büchner said the following words three days before he died. What is remarkable about them (and no argument against their authenticity, since Caroline Schulz can hardly have known Büchner's dramas well enough to have invented words of such crucial relevance) is that they are so clearly an answer to Thomas Payne's speech on "the rock of atheism"

and the Showman's "dust, sand and muck." After an attack of delirium, Büchner said loudly and distinctly:

> We do not suffer too much, we suffer too little, for it's through suffering that we attain union with God.
> We are death, dust and ashes—how should we have the right to complain?

Büchner's dramatic realism, then, was closely connected with his preference for the "philosophical," as opposed to the "teleological," view of nature; and his rejection of all *a priori* explanations of the human condition accounts for the impartiality that characterizes his realism. In choosing to write his plays in prose—but a prose highly charged with imagery—Büchner linked his work to the *Sturm und Drang* and took sides in an issue that has divided German literature ever since the seventies of the eighteenth century. Stendhal's names for the two conflicting principles, *Racine et Shakespeare*, will do as well as any if we do not interpret them too narrowly in terms of literary schools; and we must not identify the battle-cry of "Shakespeare" with the cause of Romanticism, an identification peculiar to France in the eighteen-twenties and thirties. As far as Germany is concerned, "Shakespeare" stood for the principle of poetic realism; the German Romantics, philosophically and aesthetically, were idealists.

When the *Sturm und Drang* dramatists resorted to the medium of prose, they did so in order to combine the emotive power and flexibility of Shakespeare's blank verse with the realism of what Diderot called *"le tragique domestique et bourgeois,"* as practiced in Germany by Lessing. If it seems strange that Shakespeare's German disciples should choose to write in prose, one reason is that German blank verse, on the whole, is a medium incomparably more stiff, less capable of rendering delicate modulations of thought and feeling, than its English prototype. When Goethe abandoned dramatic prose in favor of blank verse, he did so for the sake of a classicism

closer to Racine than to Shakespeare; and very few German dramatists have followed his example without suffering a loss of expressiveness, if only in the lower registers. Kleist, who chose blank verse from the start, greatly extended its range, even making it capable of assimilating a lower-class idiom, but the truly mimetic suppleness of his blank verse was the exception that proves the rule. Very generally speaking, one seems tempted to assert that a "heightened" prose is the German dramatic medium that comes closest to being an equivalent for Shakespeare's blank verse.

The two principles continued to conflict. Schiller followed Goethe's example after his own belated *Sturm und Drang* phase. In Büchner's lifetime, Grillparzer wrote in blank verse or in a trochaic meter adapted from the Spanish dramatists; but Hebbel, who was born in the same year as Büchner, wrote several tragedies in prose before committing himself to the grand manner and blank verse. One cannot help being struck by the curious recurrence of this dichotomy in the works of a long line of outstanding dramatists. As late as the end of the nineteenth century, the two dramatic media (and the two opposing principles they embody) alternated in the work of Gerhart Hauptmann; at the very end of his life, in the nineteen-forties, Hauptmann felt called upon to write a series of blank verse plays on classical subjects. The conflict, it would seem, was not only that between realism and dignity, but a conflict between youth and age. Almost in every case, the direction of the change was from prose to verse; and something of the vigor, as well as the clumsiness, of youth was lost in the process. Yet the example of Hofmannsthal in this century shows that the process can be reversed; Hofmannsthal moved from the "lyrical dramas" of his early youth through blank verse to the poetic prose of his last and greatest tragedy, *Der Turm;* a prose both highly colloquial and highly condensed, like Büchner's prose in *Woyzeck*.

Needless to say, the medium of prose in serious drama and

tragedy presents quite as many difficulties as the medium of verse. If the greatest danger of German blank verse is the monotonous sublime, the prose medium is very apt to turn into rhetoric at climactic points, with a corresponding tendency to fall into bathos elsewhere. Very few dramatists, German or otherwise, are fortunate enough to command a variant of the spoken language that strikes us as naturally poetic, such as the idiom of the Aran Islanders—or the adaption of this idiom—in the plays of John Synge. The *Sturm und Drang* dramatists —and Schiller in his early plays—have a marked tendency to indulge in extravagant and violent trope, only some of which can be traced back to "the very language of men," to make up for the loss of meter. Goethe's prose in *Egmont* avoids this pitfall, but its rhythms at certain climactic points are so marked, so nearly regular, that it becomes a kind of dissimulated verse. Many of the most distinguished of the prose dramatists needed imagery not only to "heighten" their prose when necessary, but to impregnate the whole play with a hidden, unifying significance not easily conveyed in "the very language of men."

The diction of *Dantons Tod* is still close to that of Büchner's predecessors; if it shows little or no discrepancy between colloquialism and rhetoric, this is partly because all the chief characters, in any case, were politicians; partly because it was Büchner's crucial concern to strike just the right balance between public and private utterance. His rhythms, throughout the play, are the rhythms of prose; his imagery, much of which has the *Sturm und Drang* tendency towards extravagant, gruesome and elaborately sustained trope, also serves to bear the dominant tension of the play, the conflict between determinism and freedom. One or two instances of this symbolism have already emerged in the course of this study (e.g., the puppet and the musical instrument); a detailed analysis cannot be attempted here.

In *Woyzeck*, however, Büchner achieved a fusion of nat-

uralism and intensity both unprecedented and unsurpassed. The play, as we know it, is nothing more than a number of short scenes and fragments of scenes which Büchner's editors have pieced together in whatever sequence they thought most plausible. That so brief, so fragmentary and even dubious a work has been acclaimed as a minor masterpiece, and rightly so, is one of the anomalies of modern literature. The plot is that of a vulgar melodrama, mere infidelity and revenge; and the extant scenes leave us in doubt as to its outcome. Yet to see or read *Woyzeck* is to gain an experience which no other play affords. Behind its bare diction and commonplace action there is a vision that removes this fragmentary melodrama from all the existing categories. The diction of *Woyzeck* is so perfectly adapted to its dramatic function that it draws the audience or reader into the very vortex of what it serves to express. It is a transparent diction, poetic not in itself, but despite itself, because it reveals what is essentially and timelessly human behind the semi-articulate utterings of vulgar persons, a murderer and a slut.

Woyzeck is the justification of Büchner's "philosophical" view, of his impartiality and compassion. Büchner's principal characters, unlike those of so many German dramatists, especially those that are made to speak in blank verse, do not stand for anything that can be specified with ease or with certainty. Even *Dantons Tod*—condemned as subversive both by the Imperial and the Nazi authorities—can be interpreted as a glorification or as a deadly indictment of the French Revolution. What was really intolerable about it was its refusal to strike any conventional attitude whatever, to worship any hero or do homage to power in any guise. The ruthless realism of Büchner had the effect of stripping human nature down to its constant essentials—to its lowest common denominator, many would say—and it is at this point of exposure that Büchner made his choice: the choice not to hate, despise or give up this naked humanity at its worst, but to grant it his

impartial compassion. The ultimate effect of his work is one of tragic affirmation; not because it contains a crypto-religious "message," but because it presents the naked truth about men and leaves the ultimate issues open. Büchner's impartiality, in itself, is an act of faith. There is a distinction between the impartiality of the truly imaginative writer who does justice to all his characters, and that of the merely clever writer—common enough in our time—who does justice to none. If Büchner's realism was poetic, in spite of his medium, it was because his impartiality was of the former, much rarer, kind.

The narrative prose of *Lenz* is no less extraordinary than the dramatic prose of *Woyzeck*. Büchner relates the facts of Lenz' visit to Pastor Oberlin as he found them recorded in Oberlin's diary and in a French biography of Oberlin; but, from the first, he relates them from the point of view of Lenz himself, of a man suffering from religious mania and incipient schizophrenia. This feat of sympathetic penetration called for a new narrative style and technique; Büchner provided both and, in doing so, opened up new possibilities to writers of the twentieth century. The influence of *Lenz* is apparent in Hofmannsthal's prose, particularly in his masterly *Andreas* fragment. The dislocation of syntax in *Lenz* leads straight to the experimental prose of the Expressionists.

Büchner introduces Lenz as he crosses the mountains on foot, on his way to Oberlin's vicarage; he tells us nothing about Lenz or Oberlin, nothing about the purpose of the visit, nothing of what has gone before or is about to happen. He introduces Lenz by making us see the mountain landscape through his eyes:

> . . . At first there was an urge, a movement inside him, when the stones and rocks bounded away, when the gray forest shook itself beneath him and the mist now blurred its outlines, now half unveiled the trees' gigantic limbs; there was an urge, a movement inside him, he looked for something, as though for lost dreams, but he found nothing. All seemed so small to him, so near, so wet. He would have

liked to put the whole earth to dry behind the stove, he could not understand why so much time was needed to descend a steep slope, to reach a distant point; he thought that a few paces should be enough to cover any distance. Only from time to time, when the storm thrust clouds into the valley, and the mist rose in the forest, when the voices near the rocks awoke, now like thunder subsiding far away, now rushing back towards him as if in their wild rejoicing they desired to sing the praise of Earth, and the clouds like wild neighing horses galloped towards him, and the sunbeams penetrated in between them and came to draw a flashing sword against the snowcovered plains, so that a bright, dazzling light cut across the summits into the valleys; or when the gale drove the clouds downwards and hurled them into a pale-blue lake, and then the wind died down and from the depths of the ravines, from the crests of the pine-trees, drifted upwards, with a humming like that of lullabies and pealing bells, and a soft red hue mingled with the deep azure, and little clouds on silver wings passed across, and everywhere the mountain-tops, sharp and solid, shone and glittered for miles—then he felt a strain in his chest, he stood struggling for breath, heaving, his body bent forward, his eyes and mouth wide open; he thought that he must draw the storm into himself, contain it all within him, he stretched himself out and lay on the earth, dug his way into the All, it was an ecstasy that hurt him—or he rested, and laid his head into the moss and half-closed his eyes, and then it withdrew, away, far away from him, the earth receded from him, became small as a wandering star and dipped down into a roaring stream that moved its clear waters beneath him. But these were only moments; then, soberly, he would rise, resolute, calm, as though a mere phantasmagoria had passed before his eyes—he remembered nothing. . . .

Büchner could not have achieved what he did achieve in his short life but for the creed implicit in all his works, a creed that combines an aesthetic doctrine with a new humanism. Lenz formulates this creed in the story:

One must love human nature in order to penetrate into the character of any individual; nobody, however insignificant, however ugly, should be despised; only then one can understand human nature as a whole.

Portfolio of photographs

by HAROLD FEINSTEIN

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Mrs. Zeller opposed her son's beard. She was in her house in Florida when she saw him wearing it for the first time. It was as though her mind had come to a full stop. This large full-bearded man entered the room and she remembered always later how ugly he had looked and how frightened she felt seeing him in the house; then the realization it was someone she knew, and finally the terror of recognition.

He had kissed her, which he didn't often do, and she recognized in this his attempt to make her discomfort the more painful. He held the beard to her face for a long time, then he released her as though she had suddenly disgusted him.

"Why did you do it?" she asked. She was, he saw, almost broken by the recognition.

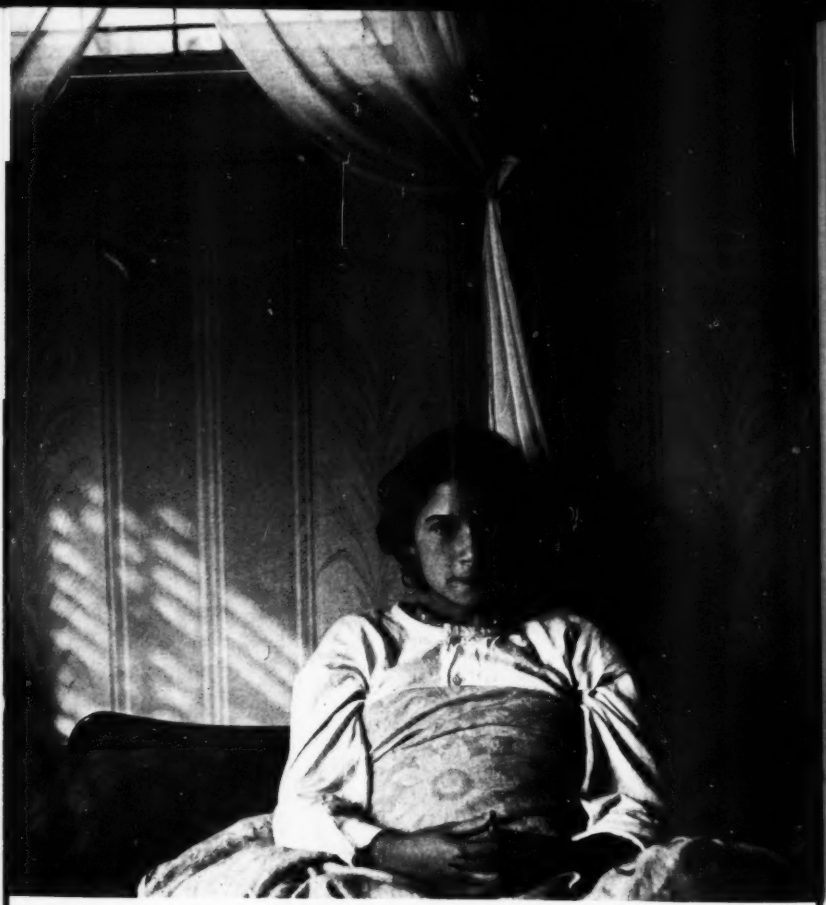
"I didn't dare tell you and come."

"That's of course true," Mrs. Zeller said. "It would have been worse. You'll have to shave it off, of course. Nobody must see you. Your father of course didn't have the courage to warn me, but I knew something was wrong the minute he entered the house ahead of you. I suppose he's upstairs laughing now. But it's not a laughing matter."

Mrs. Zeller's anger turned against her absent husband as though all error began and ended with him. "I suppose he likes it." Her dislike of Mr. Zeller struck her son as staggeringly great at that moment.

He looked at his mother and was surprised to see how young she was. She did not look much older than he did. Perhaps she looked younger now that he had his beard.

"I had no idea a son of mine would do such a thing," she said. "But why a beard, for heaven's sake," she cried, as though he had chosen something permanent and irreparable which would destroy all that they were.



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"Is it because you are an artist? No, don't answer me," she commanded. "I can't stand to hear any explanation from you. . . ."

"I have always wanted to wear a beard," her son said. "I remember wanting one as a child."

"I don't remember that at all," Mrs. Zeller said.

"I remember it quite well. I was in the summer house near that old broken-down wall and I told Ellen Whitelaw I wanted to have a beard when I grew up."

"Ellen Whitelaw, that big fat stupid thing. I haven't thought of her in years."

Mrs. Zeller was almost as much agitated by the memory of Ellen Whitelaw as by her son's beard.

"You don't like Ellen Whitelaw," her son told her, trying to remember how they had acted when they were together.

"She was a common and inefficient servant," Mrs. Zeller said, more quietly now, masking her feelings from her son.

"I suppose *he* liked her," the son pretended surprise, the cool cynical tone coming into his voice.

"Oh, your father," Mrs. Zeller said.

"Did he then?" the son asked.

"Didn't he like all of them?" she asked. The beard had changed this much already between them, she talked to him now about his father's character, while the old man stayed up in the bedroom fearing a scene.

"Didn't he always," she repeated, as though appealing to this new hirsute man.

"So," the son said, accepting what he already knew.

"Ellen Whitelaw, for God's sake," Mrs. Zeller said. The name of the servant girl brought back many other faces and rooms which she did not know were in her memory. These faces and rooms served to make the bearded man who stared at her less and less the boy she remembered in the days of Ellen Whitelaw.

"You must shave it off," Mrs. Zeller said.

"What makes you think I would do that?" the boy wondered.

"You heard me. Do you want to drive me out of my mind?"

"But I'm not going to. Or rather it's not going to."

"I will appeal to him, though a lot of good it will do," Mrs. Zeller said. "He ought to do something once in twenty years at least."

"You mean," the son said laughing, "he hasn't done anything in that long."

"Nothing I can really remember," Mrs. Zeller told him.

"It will be interesting to hear you appeal to him," the boy said. "I haven't heard you do that in such a long time."

"I don't think you ever heard me."

"I did, though," he told her. "It was in the days of Ellen Whitelaw again, in fact."

"In *those* days," Mrs. Zeller wondered. "I don't see how that could be."

"Well, it was. I can remember that much."

"You couldn't have been more than four years old. How could you remember then?"

"I heard you say to him, *You have to ask her to go.*"

Mrs. Zeller did not say anything. She really could not remember the words, but she supposed that the scene was true and that he actually remembered.

"Please shave off that terrible beard. If you only knew how awful it looks on you. You can't see anything else but it."

"Everyone in New York thought it was particularly fine."

"Particularly fine," she paused over his phrase as though its meaning eluded her.

"It's nauseating," she was firm again in her judgment.

"I'm not going to do away with it," he said, just as firm.

She did not recognize his firmness, but she saw everything changing a little, including perhaps the old man upstairs.

"Are you going to 'appeal' to him?" The son laughed again when he saw she could say no more.

"Don't mock me," the mother said. "I will speak to your father." She pretended decorum. "You can't go anywhere with us, you know."

He looked unmoved.

"I don't want any of my friends to see you. You'll have to stay in the house or go to your own places. You can't go out with us to our places and see our friends. I hope none of the neighbors see you. If they ask who you are, I won't tell them."

"I'll tell them then."

They were not angry, they talked it out like that, while the old man was upstairs.

"Do you suppose he is drinking or asleep?" she said finally.

"I thought he looked good in it, Fern," Mr. Zeller said.

"What about it makes him look good?" she said.

"It fills out his face," Mr. Zeller said, looking at the wallpaper and surprised he had never noticed what a pattern it had before; it showed the sacrifice of some sort of animal by a youth.

He almost asked his wife how she had come to pick out this pattern, but her growing fury checked him.

He saw her mouth and throat moving with unspoken words.

"Where is he now?" Mr. Zeller wondered.

"What does that matter where he is?" she said. "He has to be somewhere while he's home, but he can't go out with us."

"How idiotic," Mr. Zeller said, and he looked at his wife straight in the face for a second.

"Why did you say that?" She tried to quiet herself down.

"The way you go on about nothing, Fern." For a moment a kind of revolt announced itself in his manner, but then his eyes went back to the wallpaper, and she resumed her tone of victor.

"I've told him he must either cut it off or go back to New York."

"Why is it a beard upsets you so?" he wondered, almost to

himself.

"It's not the beard so much. It's the way he is now too. And it disfigures him so. I don't recognize him at all now when he wears it."

"So, he's never done anything of his own before," Mr. Zeller protested suddenly.

"Never done anything!" He could feel her anger covering him and glancing off like hot sun onto the wallpaper.

"That's right," he repeated. "He's never done anything. I say let him keep the beard and I'm not going to talk to him about it." His gaze lifted toward her but rested finally only on her hands and skirt.

"This is still my house," she said, "and I have to live in this town."

"When they had the centennial in Collins, everybody wore beards."

"I have to live in this town," she repeated.

"I won't talk to him about it," Mr. Zeller said.

It was as though the voice of Ellen Whitelaw reached her saying, *So that was how you appealed to him.*

She sat on the deck chair on the porch and smoked five cigarettes. The two men were somewhere in the house and she had the feeling now that she only roomed here. She wished more than that the beard was gone that her son had never mentioned Ellen Whitelaw. She found herself thinking only about her. Then she thought that now twenty years later she could not have afforded a servant, not even her.

She supposed the girl was dead. She did not know why, but she was sure she was.

She thought also that she should have mentioned her name to Mr. Zeller. It might have broken him down about the beard, but she supposed not. He had been just as adamant and unfeeling with her about the girl as he was now about her son.

Her son came through the house in front of her without speaking, dressed only in his shorts and, when he had got safely beyond her in the garden, he took off those so that he was completely naked with his back to her, and lay down in the sun.

She held the cigarette in her hand until it began to burn her finger. She felt she should not move from the place where she was and yet she did not know where to go inside the house and she did not know what pretext to use for going inside.

In the brilliant sun his body, already tanned, matched his shining black beard.

She wanted to appeal to her husband again and she knew then she could never again. She wanted to call a friend and tell her but she had no friend to whom she could tell this.

The events of the day, like a curtain of extreme bulk, cut her off from her son and husband. She had always ruled the house and them even during the awful Ellen Whitelaw days and now as though they did not even recognize her, they had taken over. She was not even here. Her son could walk naked with a beard in front of her as though she did not exist. She had nothing to fight them with, nothing to make them see with. They ignored her as Mr. Zeller had when he looked at the wallpaper and refused to discuss their son.

"You can grow it back when you're in New York," Mr. Zeller told his son.

He did not say anything about his son lying naked before him in the garden but he felt insulted almost as much as his mother had, yet he needed his son's permission and consent now and perhaps that was why he did not mention the insult of his nakedness.

"I don't know why I have to act like a little boy all the time with you both."

"If you were here alone with me you could do anything you wanted. You know I never asked anything of you. . . ."

When his son did not answer, Mr. Zeller said, "Did I?"

"That was the trouble," the son said.

"What?" the father wondered.

"You never wanted anything from me and you never wanted to give me anything. I didn't matter to you."

"Well, I'm sorry," the father said doggedly.

"Those were the days of Ellen Whitelaw," the son said in tones like the mother.

"For God's sake," the father said and he put a piece of grass between his teeth.

He was a man who kept everything down inside of him, everything had been tied and fastened so long there was no part of him any more that could struggle against the stricture of his life.

There were no words between them for some time; then Mr. Zeller could hear himself bringing the question out: "Did she mention that girl?"

"Who?" The son pretended blankness.

"Our servant."

The son wanted to pretend again blankness but it was too much work. He answered: "No, I mentioned it. To her surprise."

"Don't you see how it is?" the father went on to the present. "She doesn't speak to either of us now and if you're still wearing the beard when you leave it's me she will be punishing six months from now."

"And you want me to save you from your wife."

"Bobby," the father said, using the childhood tone and inflection. "I wish you would put some clothes on too when you're in the garden. With me it doesn't matter, you could do anything. I never asked you anything. But with her . . ."

"God damn *her*," the boy said.

The father could not protest. He pleaded with his eyes at his son.

The son looked at the father and he could see suddenly

also the youth hidden in his father's face. He was young like his mother. They were both young people who had learned nothing from life, were stopped and drifting where they were twenty years before with Ellen Whitelaw. Only *she,* the son thought, must have learned from life, must have gone on to some development in her character, while they had been tied to the shore where she had left them.

"Imagine living with someone for six months and not speaking," the father said as if to himself. "That happened once before, you know, when you were a little boy."

"I don't remember that," the son said, some concession in his voice.

"You were only four," the father told him.

"I believe this is the only thing I ever asked of you," the father said. "Isn't that odd, I can't remember ever asking you anything else. Can you?"

The son looked coldly away at the sky and then answered, contempt and pity struggling together, "No, I can't."

"Thank you, Bobby," the father said.

"Only don't *plead* any more, for Christ's sake." The son turned from him.

"You've only two more days with us, and if you shaved it off and put on just a few clothes, it would help me through the year with her."

He spoke as though it would be his last year.

"Why don't you beat some sense into her?" The son turned to him again.

The father's gaze fell for the first time complete on his son's nakedness.

Bobby had said he would be painting in the storeroom and she could send up a sandwich from time to time, and Mr. and Mrs. Zeller were left downstairs together. She refused to allow her husband to answer the phone.

In the evening Bobby came down dressed carefully and his

beard combed immaculately and looking, they both thought, curled.

They talked about things like horse racing, in which they were all somehow passionately interested, but which they now discussed irritably as though it too were a menace to their lives. They talked about the uselessness of art and why people went into it with a detachment that would have made an outsider think that Bobby was as unconnected with it as a jockey or oil magnate. They condemned nearly everything and then the son went upstairs and they saw one another again briefly at bedtime.

The night before he was to leave they heard him up all hours, the water running, and the dropping of things made of metal.

Both parents were afraid to get up and ask him if he was all right. He was like a wealthy relative who had commanded them never to question him or interfere with his movements even if he was dying.

He was waiting for them at breakfast, dressed only in his shorts but he looked more naked than he ever had in the garden because his beard was gone. Over his chin lay savage and profound scratches as though he had removed the hair with a hunting knife and pincers.

Mrs. Zeller held her breast and turned to the coffee and Mr. Zeller said only his son's name and sat down with last night's newspaper.

"What time does your plane go?" Mrs. Zeller said in a dead, muffled voice.

The son began putting a white paste on the scratches of his face and did not answer.

"I believe your mother asked you a question," Mr. Zeller said, pale and shaking.

"Ten-forty," the son replied.

The son and the mother exchanged glances and he could see at once that his sacrifice had been in vain: she would also

see the beard there again under the scratches and the gashes he had inflicted on himself, and he would never really be her son again. Even for his father it must be much the same. He had come home as a stranger who despised them and he had shown his nakedness to both of them. All three longed for separation and release.

But Bobby could not control the anger coming up in him, and his rage took an old form. He poured the coffee into his saucer because Mr. Zeller's mother had always done this and it had infuriated Mrs. Zeller because of its low-class implications.

He drank viciously from the saucer, blowing loudly.

Both parents watched him helplessly like insects suddenly swept against the screen.

"It's not too long till Christmas," Mr. Zeller brought out. "We hope you'll come back for the whole vacation."

"We do," Mrs. Zeller said in a voice completely unlike her own.

"So," Bobby began, but the torrent of anger would not let him say the thousand fierce things he had ready.

Instead, he blew savagely from the saucer and spilled some onto the chaste white summer rug below him. Mrs. Zeller did not move.

"I would invite you to New York," Bobby said quietly now, "but of course I will have the beard there and it wouldn't work for you."

"Yes," Mr. Zeller said, incoherent.

"I do hope you don't think I've been . . ." Mrs. Zeller cried suddenly, and they both waited to hear whether she was going to weep or not, but she stopped herself perhaps by the realization that she had no tears and that the feelings which had come over her about Bobby were likewise spent.

"I can't think of any more I can do for you," Bobby said suddenly.

They both stared at each other as though he had actually left and they were alone at last.

"Is there anything more you want me to do?" he said, coldly vicious.

They did not answer.

"I hate and despise what both of you have done to yourselves, but the thought that you would be sitting here in your middle-class crap not speaking to one another is too much even for me. That's why I did it, I guess, and not out of any love. I didn't want you to think that."

He sloshed in the saucer.

"Bobby," Mr. Zeller said.

The son brought out his *What?* with such finished beauty of coolness that he paused to admire his own control and mastery.

"Please, Bobby," Mr. Zeller said.

They could all three of them hear a thousand speeches. The agony of awkwardness was made unendurable by the iciness of the son, and all three paused over this glacial control which had come to him out of art and New York, as though it was the fruit of their lives and the culmination of their twenty years.

Baby Dodds' Story: As Told to Larry Gara

[Larry Gara writes: "I met Baby Dodds at George Lewis' first Chicago appearance in March of 1953. That evening he sat in on several numbers and later, during conversation, I got the idea of recording his life story. Baby was a superb narrator and I still recall with joy the many Sundays I spent in his 51st Street, Chicago, apartment while he recounted the details of his long and varied career. Baby Dodds played in many great jazz bands, including some led by Papa Celestin, Fate Marable, King Oliver, Bunk Johnson, Jimmie Noone, and Baby's brother, the clarinetist, Johnny Dodds. He made records with Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong, Mutt Carey, Natty Dominique, and many other famous jazz musicians.

"Baby Dodds developed a style of his own which is sharp and clear but never obtrusive. He has a special type of press roll and often used to shimmy as he drummed. He considers drumming an art and, like other New Orleans jazzmen, he prefers to work as a part of a group rather than to dominate a band. His drumming is relaxed yet full of drive. The rhythm is always steady and without the rumble that so many drummers produce. Baby is as versatile as he is original; he has played drums for New Orleans street parades, for small Chicago outfits, for fourteen piece orchestras, for recorded drum solos and for the dancer Merce Cunningham.

"Although he has had three strokes Baby Dodds is far from disabled. He can still play wonderful music and continues to think of ways to further perfect his style. Recently he has made some fine recordings with Natty Dominique's band which will be issued by William Russell on his American Music label. They will help give a much deserved recognition of Baby's contribution to American jazz music. For, as his old friend and fellow-musician, Natty Dominique, said: 'Baby Dodds has a rhythm of his own. It will be Baby Dodds' as long as he

lives, and for all the days that's coming. Baby Dodds is the world's greatest drummer.'"]

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1. NEW ORLEANS BEGINNINGS

When I was just a youngster my mother taught me a poem which I always remembered. It was an ideal which I tried to follow throughout my musical career and it went like this:

> All you do, do with your might
> Because things done by halves
> Are never done right.
>
> Be the labor great or small,
> Do it well or not at all.

I always worked to improve my drumming and I never drummed just for money. I loved it and I felt that drums have as much music in them as any other instrument. And I think the idea of the guy who invented drums was to have a person beat drums to get something out of them. Quite natural the guy who made them first knew what was supposed to be gotten out of them. But I doubt if anyone knows it today. In my estimation drums should play according to the melody and still keep time. Those to me are the drummer's two specific jobs. Although a drummer can't make a bad note, he provides a very important foundation for the rest of the musicians. You can't get into a locked house without a key and the drum is the key to the band.

Although I never forgot my mother's lesson, I don't remember too much about her because she died when I was only nine years old. I know that she was a very good-looking, brown-skinned woman. She had high cheek bones and a very

long Roman nose with a hump in it. I don't recall that she played any musical instrument but she used to sing religious songs with the rest of our family. In school I was always first or second in my class and my mother wanted to send me to Tuskegee to become a doctor. But of course, after she passed away, things turned out differently.

But when I was little I was inspired by music all around. Besides my brother John, who played his clarinet, my father and his brother used to play violin. One of my sisters played a melodeon, and my father and sister also used to play harmonicas. My sister used to play some blues and I tried to pick it up. The rest of the family didn't know it because I would get off by myself and try to play different things my sister played. But I didn't think I was so good with it and I gave it up. My dad also played quills. He took green bamboo reeds and removed the soft spongy material in them. That would leave a clear hole in the reed and then my father would cut them down to about three to six inches, each one a little longer than the other. Then he would put a plug in the top and cut it down, like any other whistle, and he would blow these quills and make very nice music. There was one quill for each note of the scale and he could play almost anything on them. It sounded just like a flute but there was no fingering. I made myself a little set of quills and my father helped me but I didn't make out so well on them. My father was very religious and he only played and sang hymns and sacred music. In fact, everybody in the family used to sing. It was the most beautiful quartet you ever heard, to hear that outfit sing. I could sing soprano or tenor and my brother John used to sing real high tenor. And do you know what took it away from him? Clarinet! And do you know what took mine away? Whiskey!

My father worked on a farm part of the time and he was also a handyman for a while. And for a time he worked in a warehouse. He never went to school but he was very good at

figures. He was better at arithmetic than I was and he didn't need a pencil and paper to do it. He taught himself to read and write while working in the warehouse. He was also a first deacon in the Baptist Church. His job was to open the church when the pastor wasn't there and he had to take care of the library. We kids all went to Sunday school, which started at nine-thirty or ten, and we had to stay for the eleven o'clock service which lasted until noon. Since our dad was there we didn't dare leave. And during the service you could hear a pin drop. We didn't dare chew gum or even look up. If we weren't gentlemen on the street, we were gentlemen in church. And church was different from what it is now; there was no hollering or whooping. And they didn't have music in the church; there was only singing.

In those early days I also used to hear classical music. Negroes were not allowed in the places where it was played so I heard it by standing on the outside. Many times I heard symphonies that way. Sometimes we used to stand in the hallway of the Tulane Theatre in New Orleans. One side was an opera house and the other was this theatre and we'd stand in between to hear the music. That is where I learned to like symphony music and I especially loved to hear the flutes. I even wanted to study to be a flute player. I don't see how in the world I ever wanted to play the flute, because there was no field for colored people in classical music. That's why I never took it up. I always liked symphonies and still do. But, being a jazz man, when I hear a symphony I pick out different things which I feel I can use in jazz. And I learned quite a bit from such listening. I used to carry any melody on the snare drums that a band played. I got that idea from listening to symphonic music and also from playing in street parades. They still do that in New Orleans parades, but not as distinctly as they used to.

I began to be interested in becoming a musician when I saw what my brother John was doing. We used to go around

to different houses and ask for old bottles which we could sell to the guy that picked up rags and things. Instead of money he'd pay us with candy and whistles. That's where John got a little tin flute. It had only six holes but he was blowing it around, and he would play little things on it. One day my dad asked him what he really would like to play and John said the clarinet. And then my dad got him a clarinet. And the minute my brother began to play it he had a perfect tone. That was around 1909, when John was about seventeen and I was only fifteen years old. Of course this interested me. I wanted to get something too and the instrument I wanted was a flute. Since it was out of the question for me to play in a pit orchestra I never got a flute but I still wanted something.

John played his clarinet in the neighborhood and on Sundays he would go and play in parties and he would get all the ice cream and cake. Now I didn't like that. I was the baby in the family and felt I should get the treats. I was especially jealous when John went to different parties and I wasn't even invited. So I finally got an idea. I took a lard can and put holes in the bottom and turned it over and took nails and put holes around the top of it. Then I took some rounds out of my mother's chairs and made drumsticks out of them. Sometimes we used to go in the back yard, to our back place. There was a baseboard and I used to kick my heels against the baseboard and make it sound like a bass drum, using the can as a snare drum. With a clarinet it sounded so good that all the kids in the neighborhood came around to get in on the fun.

By that time I had already got my name "Baby." I was born in New Orleans on Christmas Eve, 1894. Except for my baby sister, Hattie, who was born a few years later, I was the youngest of six children. My name was the same as my father's, Warren. My mother would call "Warren," and I would answer. She'd say, "I'm calling your father." Then

she'd say "Warren," and my father would answer, and she'd say "I'm calling the baby." That's where the "Baby" came in. My sisters and brothers picked it up and Johnny carried it to school. Of course that did it. I used to get angry about it and I've jumped on many kids and fought them for calling me Baby. When I got out of grammar school the larger girls would call me Baby, and I liked that. I didn't resent the girls' using the name but I did the boys'. And, of course, anything a person resents is going to happen. After I got into the music business, people found out my name was Baby and it fit perfectly. Baby Dodds is much shorter than Warren and for some reason an alias, or a nickname, will go much farther in life than a real name. And so it was with me, even before I got my first drums.

But I wanted a real drum set. I told my father and he said, "You don't get any drum. How on earth could we stand all that noise! It's bad enough around here now. You'd chase everybody out of the neighborhood." I thought that was very bad. It hurt me and I couldn't understand why he would buy my brother a clarinet and not buy me drums. I knew drums would not cost as much. Of course, in those days, any child who turned out to be a musician was considered no good. As a musician one had to play in places where there was liquor and the chances were he would drink a lot. And I had begun drinking before I started playing music. It wasn't that I had anything on my mind, or drank to drown my troubles, but I used to love the taste of liquor and always have. Then again we had to play in the tenderloin district. We were looked upon as nobody. Musicians were also very raggedy, and many of them didn't care about their appearance.

But I was determined to get drums and finally my father consented to let me have them if I bought them myself. Well, I didn't mind working because I had helped my father work around the little farm where he worked as handyman. We kids used to help him tend the cows, chickens, ducks, hogs

and goats. I used to plant and tend the different vegetables, but I hated to churn the butter which my father made to sell. He wouldn't let me fool around with the cows, but I used to feed, curry and clean the horses for him. We were living at Waveland, Mississippi, then, so I went to New Orleans and found a job. I was about sixteen years old and got work with a wealthy Jewish family named Levi. My brother's wife worked there as a cook and that's how I got the job. When I went there they asked me if I knew how to wait on tables. I didn't know how and had never waited on a table, but I told them "yes." I worked as a butler and fixed salads, cleaned the rug and took care of the dining room. On Thursdays and Fridays I did the yard work. I worked there about a year and a half and kept that job going until I was able to save up money and buy some second-hand drums. I got only four dollars and six bits a week but managed to save around ten or twelve dollars to buy my first drum. It was a single-head snare drum. I also got some sticks and different little things but it took so long to save up enough to get more drums that I got a job at Mentes bag factory.

At the bag factory I got a dollar and a quarter a day. I did a little bit of everything there. I worked in the drier. We had to hang the sacks on a hook, and after a certain period of time they would go through and come out dry. When they came out I had to count them and put so many in a bundle. There were fifty sacks in a bundle and it was very heavy work. They made sacks of different quality burlap. They used the first-class stuff for sugar sacks. Out of others they made coarser grade sugar sacks, coffee sacks, rice sacks and oyster sacks. There were about two hundred and fifty people working at Mentes but quite naturally the colored fellows couldn't get any of the better jobs. They did the heavy work like trucking the bales of burlap in and out, picking up the work off the sewing machines and packing up the bags to go to the press.

I worked there for three or four years and did a little bit of everything except the cutting and sewing.

While working there I bought the rest of my drum set, one piece at a time. I bought a bass drum, which was a big high thing with ropes like the drums they used in school bands. I had to pull them to tighten and after they were pulled a while the ropes got slick. Then I would let my fingers slide on the rope. It cost me about ten dollars. It was a big, narrow thing and I had no cymbal, foot pedal or anything else. Finally I got a foot pedal, put the set together, and by gimmy, I come to make a noise! I amused the kids in the neighborhood and was real satisfied with myself. Then I added little traps that I needed, like a cymbal, wood block, and a ratchet and whistles and things of that sort. I got them all second-hand at a pawnshop but they were as good as new to me. I loved them as much as if they had just come from a factory. It was the hard way and the best way since I knew that I had to take care of them. And I've always tried to take care of my drums. I believe that professional musicians should always try to keep up their instruments. Many drummers don't care how bad their drum sets look. If they can make a dollar on them, they don't worry. I never was that way. I've had some bad-looking drums in my day, but it wasn't that the heads had holes in them, or patches, nothing like that. I think that's lazy. If a person makes a living on something and doesn't keep it in top working shape, well, he's just not much good. You can be lazy, but be lazy in some other way, not on the instrument you make your bread on.

The man who was my inspiration when I first started drumming was a fellow named Mack Murray. I first heard him when I was about fifteen, before I had a chance to get hold of any drums. He was a very tall skinny guy and what a drummer! He played in street parades and in the Robichaux Band. When playing for dancing Mack Murray used a very

small snare drum which looked like a banjo, and my inspiration came from his drumming. He used ebony sticks and you would never know that they were so heavy. He played beautiful drums. When he made a roll it sounded like he was tearing paper. It was a marvelous thing. Another wonderful drummer was a Creole fellow named Louis Cottrell. He was very good at examining drums. He could take a snare drum and pick it up and turn it over and examine it to tell if it was any good or not. And he never bought his drums. When the music stores in New Orleans got a new set of drums they would send for Cottrell, who would try them out and tell if they were good. He had a very light technique and played both parades and dance-band music. He was with the Excelsior Orchestra.

Of course, when I began drumming I soon wanted a teacher because I wanted to know what I was doing and how to do it. I got a teacher by the name of Dave Perkins. He was very light, like a white fellow, and was a straight man in music. He had an awful big class and taught all kinds of drumming to all colors although he was in a colored neighborhood. But he taught me individually and I paid him by the lesson rather than go in the class. Dave Perkins gave me the rudiments of drumming. And I did all right with him. He gave me a drum pad to use but he didn't want me to use a bass drum. Well, he didn't know I owned one so I practiced there with the pad, and I'd go home at night and execute what I knew on both bass drum and snare. I got along so well Dave wanted to know if I played anywhere or if I had a bass drum. I told him I didn't have any, and he said, "No, I don't want you to touch it." I stayed with him at least a year, and after I got so far advanced, and did so well on my bass drum, I went to another teacher.

Meanwhile I had done a lot of street parade work with Bunk Johnson's band. I used to tell them how good I was but still I wanted to go to a teacher some more. I went to a fellow named Walter Brundy. He used to play with Robichaux and

was a very good drummer. He was a reading drummer and that's what I wanted to learn—to read music. I didn't get that from Perkins. Brundy taught me the fundamentals of reading music and I found out that everything I had been doing was wrong. He taught me that the right hand was "mammy" and the left "daddy," and I soon learned how to get my two hands working differently. This was, of course, after I mastered having both hands do the same thing. After I got that pretty well, Brundy gave me the two drums to work on. Brundy and Perkins were the only two teachers whom I paid, but I got ideas and pointers from lots of others who were playing in New Orleans at that time. I went to Cottrell and learned some more of the rudiments of technique from him. I also got some pointers from a very good drummer whose name was Paps, but we didn't call him Paps, we called him Rabbit. He was with tent shows and I heard that he used to drum for Ma Rainey. I never took lessons from him but learned just by sitting around and looking at him work. For a while he was my favorite drummer. He also played with Armand Piron's five or six piece band and I sat in several times with that outfit. It was a jazz band, but on a higher level. In those days I wasn't reading music so when the time came to read music I had to get up. But they liked my work very much. I got my press roll from Henry Zeno, Henry Martin and Tubby Hall. The guy who used it most effectively was Henry Martin. He played with Kid Ory and it was very effective. It was a pretty hard thing to learn but I worked at it until I got it. Of course I did it in my own way and according to my ability, and it never was exactly like someone else's. I used to study the rolls of different drummers at dances and in parades and worked out a long press roll which I preferred to the shorter ones. Tubby Hall's brother, Minor Hall, uses a shorter type press roll today. Where I used three beats, Minor Hall used only one, and of course that makes a different sound.

I also used to listen to some New Orleans drummers who

didn't inspire my work. There was Black Benny who was a kind of rowdy fellow. He wasn't a taught drummer but just picked it up. He played so well at it and enjoyed drumming so much that all the fellows liked him from that point and hired him to play. He only played in street bands and there was nothing special about his drumming except that he would always do something to fill in and make some novelty out of it. I heard him when I was very young but his style of drumming was nothing that inspired me.

Of course, a great deal about drumming I had to work out for myself. When you work at something daily that's yours. I taught myself how to tune my drums and how to put the heads on and tuck them in. The skin was wet when I got them and I learned how to trim the edges and then tuck the heads on. Today they have regular tuckers but when I started we used to tuck them on with a spoon handle. We had to tuck it very tight. And today they don't sell drum heads that you have to wet. They are on the hoop when you buy them. Then we had to put them on the hoop. All those things I had to learn by myself. But when you want to be a drummer, nothing's too hard.

And when I was learning I picked up the different drum terms like the mammy and daddy stuff which Brundy taught me. I learned that a biff shot was one abrupt fast lick, a flam is sixteen notes, a flim-flam is thirty-two, and a lick is when you just hit the drum. With a lick you just hit it, and with a biff you try to make it sound on something, either the rim or anything else solid. The pickup was the first beat and the rudiments are the things we did with a number to be played. It was just different things we did to make the number go and to make the other fellows play. In other words, in a calm, ordinary way you push the number and the other musicians too.

When I began playing I soon got a job with Willie High-

tower's band, the American Stars. I got it through Robert Smith, the guitar player. I had been working as an ordinary laborer for his father who was a contractor. I started working with gravel and the wheelbarrow and that was pretty tough work. Then I began using the trowel and got paid a much better salary. After Bob found out that I could drum he asked me to come to rehearsal and I got the job with Hightower. With that outfit we played little ice-cream party dates and at first all I got was ice cream. I didn't even look for any money and didn't think that I was good enough to get money. I was only about sixteen when I started working with Hightower. It was a very nice little seven-man outfit. Hightower played a trumpet, Roy Palmer played trombone, Wade Whaley played clarinet, and we also had a violin in the group. Hightower was a very nice, even-tempered fellow and I never did see him drink. He played both jazz and straight horn and he'd play one chorus nice and then he would chop it up and play it jazzy.

We began playing at dances at lawn parties and fish fries, all outdoors. Through my playing the dates with the Hightower outfit my name began ringing around with different fellows. Roy Palmer, our trombone player, got a job in the tenderloin district, at the Fewclothes Café, and he insisted on getting me for a drummer. In the front of the place there was a bar and in the back was a dance floor, cabaret style. There were five of us, including a bass player. But Roy let the bass player go and that left only four. Sidney Desvigne played trumpet. He was a very light fellow with light hair and we used to call him "Sheep." Roy Palmer played trombone, Walter Decou, piano, and I played drums. We made some pretty nice music, too. The district was a big field for jazz men. We only made a dollar a night but we would also pass the hat around. Sometimes we took in ten to twenty-five dollars an evening. And that wasn't bad money between the

four of us. If somebody asked for a number they would always give you money. Whatever we got we'd bring up and put in the kitty and later divide it among the whole group.

The girls who worked in the district really liked the music and they often sent up for different requests and sent money along. Sometimes they would work along with the band and have the fellows they were with ask for certain numbers. Sometimes they asked the men to give bigger tips for the musicians, too.

In those days we used to play all kinds of numbers. New Orleans is a seaport town and boats would come in from all parts of Europe. Many of the fellows had been on boats for three to five months when they came in and they were glad to find a dance hall and fast women in the district. Then we'd play *Over the Waves* for the sailors and different nationality songs. The men would pay for them because they hadn't heard their native songs in the United States before. We'd also jazz up songs like *In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree.* We used to take waltz tunes and change them into four-four time. And *High Society* we always played as a straight march. Now they play it as a jazz number. And the whole point of that number is the clarinet solo. It was Picou's number and he did wonderfully on it. We played what was later called ragtime but was then called syncopation. It was picked up off Scott Joplin. It was called syncopation before I even started playing. Syncopation is tied with two groups of notes, or four groups, and in swing music it is four and six groups. It makes the time different. In jazz we call that a bundle of notes together. And we always stressed the melody. That's the secret of jazz music, to carry the melody at all times. The melody is supposed to be heard distinctly, carried by one specific instrument, the trumpet, trombone, clarinet, or violin.

On New Orleans dance dates we also had to play mazurkas, quadrilles, polkas, and schottisches. There were certain halls in New Orleans where you had to play all those things. Some

of the Creole people went only for that music. If you couldn't play them you just didn't get the job.

Of course we also played the blues. Some of the guys would come in and drink with women and they would be blue about something, and they would ask us to play the blues. The blues that were popular were the *Memphis Blues,* the *St. Louis Blues,* and *Careless Love. Bucket Got a Hole in It* was also a blues type of number and *Ace in the Hole* was another. The blues were played in New Orleans in the early days very, very slow, and not like today, but in a Spanish rhythm.

After I left the Fewclothes outfit I worked for a piano player named Manuel Manetta, who also played in the district. The place was called the Casino. It was a little uppity place that had about five or six men in the band. It had been known as the Villa Café but some killing had gone on there and the owner changed the name to the Casino. Before long I left the district and went back to Hightower. I was glad to get away from the district, anyway. I didn't like that sort of life. Furthermore, I had a girl in the district who wanted to cut my throat.

In the meantime Hightower got a regular job playing at St. Catherine's Hall, which was a Catholic school. Ory's band had been playing there but he gave the job up, and when Hightower found out about it he spoke to the priest in charge. The school used to give dances every Friday and Sunday. We didn't get both days but we got the Sunday dates. When I first went there I didn't even think about whether I was going to get paid or not. I wasn't particular and I was especially excited about the work because my brother John had played in the same place with Ory. All I wanted to do was to get a chance to play where my brother used to play. And we made very good and kept those Sunday dances for a long time. I played with the American Stars off and on for several years.

It was when I was working with Willie Hightower's outfit

that I first realized how important drums were to a band. Sometimes when I had to go out and happened to hear the group start to play, I could feel that something was missing. And the greatest satisfaction of my entire musical career was knowing that I belonged there. Without the drum there was something lacking. No instrument can take the drum's place. With all the outfits I played, I felt that I was just as essential in the outfit as any other instrument in it. I knew I had to do my part. I had to beat drums because nothing else answers. Without my filling in my part it would mean a difference. Of course, I never worked any place where I felt I was the whole thing. I felt that all the other instruments were needed too. No one can do anything by himself. If there are more than two it's a group, and I feel that all members are essential. In playing music I always felt that I was part of the group and not an individual performer.

When I first started playing in New Orleans I heard a lot of good jazz musicians. There were Buddy Petit, Joe Johnson, George Larroque and Andrew Kimball, trumpet players, and Frankie Dusen, trombone player. There was also a tall dark fellow by the name of Eddie Jackson who used to play very good tuba. He could play both sweet and hot. But in those days they only used tubas in street parades, never in dances. Sometimes I used to go out to Lincoln Park where both Buddy Bolden and John Robichaux were playing. Robichaux had a sweet band and they would sometimes play the classics in swing. Those days they didn't call it jazz, but they called it swing. Robichaux played in a closed-in place like a pavilion and the better-class people came to hear his band. Bolden had a band which played in an open place with only a roof over it. The sporting class of people would go to hear Bolden, but both bands played for dancing and the people went to dance, not just to listen. We used to call it a "honky-tonk" where Bolden played and his men were the "bums." I heard Bolden play but can't remember anything about him or the music.

He was one of the big guys of the day. Those days they had four or five trumpet men that were very good but Bolden was supposed to be king of them all. I also heard Picou play clarinet when I was little and he was really great. George Baquet was another guy playing clarinet who was just about as great as Picou. And of course, besides hearing jazz music played for dancing, I heard jazz in all the New Orleans parades. I also knew Jelly Roll Morton from the time I was a kid, and the great pianist Tony Jackson. I used to work in the place where he worked but that group of men were older and I never got close to them. To even get in a conversation with them I had to buy them a lot of drinks or just pass by and take what I could get and go in. In those days a beginner wasn't allowed to be with a bunch of men that played such a high class of music. They wouldn't have anything to do with us.

I played with Big Eye Louis Nelson in different bands and at different times. He used to play clarinet with the Dusen band, not as a regular player, but just now and then. He was a very determined fellow, especially on the young musicians just starting up. He'd show a youngster all he knew but he had a very glum disposition. He knew he had to be stern with those of us who were learning. He didn't kid around much and we never got to be close friends. He lived downtown, and I lived uptown. He was on the north side of town and I lived on the east side. In other words, he was a Creole and lived in the French part of town. Canal Street was the dividing line and the people from the different sections didn't mix. The musicians mixed only if you were good enough. But at one time the Creole fellows thought the uptown musicians weren't good enough to play with them, because most of the uptown musicians didn't read music. Everybody in the French part of town read music. Then too, the Creole people in New Orleans were very high strung. Most of them had a little better education and it seems as though they had a little more money.

When they went into music they were given money to get a teacher and they would learn music from the start. My brother and I were really exceptions in that we both got teachers and became reading musicians.

Of course in those days the instrumentation was different. When I first started out they had no piano. They mostly used bass viol, guitar, clarinet, trumpet, trombone and drums. The guitar carried only rhythm in the bands. Actually you have a much sweeter jazz band when you have a guitar and no piano. In that way the drums couldn't outplay the other guys, because the drummer had to keep in touch with the guitar. The guitar is not a harsh instrument but a very melodious one. When the piano came in it was harsher and louder than the guitar, although in my time we had some guitar players that were awful loud. There were Johnny St. Cyr, Brock Mumford and Lorenzo Stalls. Later they switched to banjo. I think the first band to switch was Frankie Dusen. They made the change because the banjo was a novelty. And they used two types of banjo. The regulation and the tenor.

In many places they had nothing but just piano and drums. In fact, on one occasion, I had to play a whole evening with nothing but drums and trombone. That was with Jack Carey. We had a date to play uptown in what they called the Irish Channel. The Irish people liked the colored music and they hired Jack Carey's outfit. He had no regular drummer but would hire individuals for different dates, and that time he wanted me to play with the group. It had rained in the afternoon and a lot of fellows failed to appear at the dance. Only Jack Carey and I showed up with our drums and trombone. Well, those Irishmen were very tough on colored fellows and we wanted to avoid a misunderstanding. We knew if we played the best we could they'd be satisfied. After waiting a half hour we noticed that a lot of the Irish fellows were getting drunker and we knew what would happen if the music didn't start soon. So we began to play that way and played the

whole dance through. I think it sounded all right, too. Carey played a rough, tailgate style trombone and they liked it very much. He carried the melody and quite natural I was there with the time, so there was nothing to worry about. We both had to work very hard though, because on the drums I had to do everything to fill in, to make it sound like something. We knew we couldn't sound like a full band, but they danced to it and there was no trouble.

Jack Carey was a wild and quick-tempered fellow. He was older than his brother Mutt, who played trumpet. Sometimes he was quite loud and boisterous. Mutt was very quiet. Jack wanted to have things perfect but when he tried to explain something carefully he couldn't do it, and then he would get all upset. Mutt had more of an ability to explain things than Jack. They were different in all ways. Mutt was a very light fellow and Jack had a dark skin. Mutt was always kidding and joking and I never saw him really angry. And they used to call *Tiger Rag* "Play, Jack Carey." The part where they say "hold that tiger," Jack Carey would make on the trombone, and they used to say "Jack Carey, Jack Carey!" Everybody played it that way saying "Jack Carey" instead of "hold that tiger."

While I was playing around with different outfits my brother was established and playing with Kid Ory's band. He had studied clarinet under different fellows. One was Papa Tio, the old man Lorenzo, and Charlie McCurdy was another one. They were both straight musicians, not jazz men. And when John came along, he came along against Sidney Bechet. That meant he really had to fight. John got the job with Ory through Pops Foster. Foster was with the Ory band and they were using Wade Whaley on clarinet. Pops Foster happened to come by the house and hear John's clarinet. He stopped on the sidewalk and knocked on the door and asked my brother if he wanted to join a band. My brother said "yes," and Pops Foster told Ory and everybody he had a pretty

clarinet player he would like them to hear. They had a rehearsal of some sort and John joined Ory, and he played with him a number of years.

Sometimes I would go around to dances in New Orleans where my brother was playing with Ory. I used to go to the drummer, Henry Martin, and get him to let me drum. He would get up and I would sit down in the band. And then the band fellows would look around and see it wasn't the same style of drumming. My brother and Ory and the others didn't think that I was capable or good enough to play in that band, and they'd walk off the stand one by one, until all the fellows were off but the bass player and me. The bass player was Eddie Garland, and the next thing he would be laying the bass down, and I'd know there was nothing for me to do but get down. And when I'd get down the band would all come back again. It was very embarrassing. They pulled that quite a few times, made me feel awfully bad. I was determined, though. I felt as though a baby must crawl before it can walk, and I felt that I wasn't quite ready to walk yet and just took it for granted. And for an encouragement I would go around and do the same thing all over again. That gave me ambition to learn. I was trying to play with someone who was capable of playing. And many times later I returned the compliment. But I never did get over the feeling I had towards Ory. Later I played with him on the West Coast but I never got close enough to Ory to know him. It's a respect that I gave him that I perhaps wouldn't give anyone else.

The musicians of those days were remarkable men. When the leader of an orchestra would hire a man, there was no jealousy in the gang. Everybody took him in as a brother, and he was treated accordingly. If a fellow came to work with anything, even a sandwich or an orange, the new man would be offered a piece of it. That's the way they were. They believed in harmony. That's how they played music, in harmony. And that's the way the fellows were, those oldtimers. And I

was young and I had to give them a lot of respect. If those men would happen to like you enough to pick you up, they would either make a musician out of you, or you wouldn't be any musician. In their way, they were rough, but in a way they weren't rough. Everything they told you they would make you do for your own benefit. But I used to try to drum and I'd drum my best and they knew I was doing my best and they all said the same thing. They said, "Someday he's going to be a good drummer because he pays attention. He wants to learn." And I did.

But while I was learning I kept playing and I left the American Stars to join Frankie Dusen's Eagle Band. Dusen was a very high-strung good-looking fellow. He was part Indian and had a brown skin but reddish complexion. He had a high nose with a lump in the middle—real Indian nose—and very long curly hair. He played tailgate trombone, something like Ory, but a little smoother and with a bit more polish. Bunk Johnson played trumpet in that outfit. The little fellow that was the drummer, Henry Zeno, got sick and died, practically overnight. He ate raw oysters and drank whiskey, and it killed him. I had built such a reputation around New Orleans that they said, "Let's get Babe." Then that made me play the street parades, too. It was the first time I played them. Different social clubs in the city would hire our band. They would have bands to turn out with a parade or for some other function. Sometimes it was anniversaries or social occasions and sometimes the funeral of a member. With the brass band I only had one drum, the snare drum. Someone else played the bass drum. We also played for dancing with the Dusen Band but it was a bigger outfit when we played parades.

There was a traditional line-up for the New Orleans parades. The trombone was always first. They always used two or three trumpets and they came next. Behind the trumpets would be the heavy instruments, like bass, tubas, and bari-

tones. Then behind them were the altos, two or three alto horns, and behind them were the clarinets. It was very good if there were two. Usually it was only one, an E flat. Then behind the clarinet would come the drums, only two, a bass drum and a snare drum. That was for balance. For funeral marches the snare drum is muffled by pulling the snares off. When the snares are off it's the same as a tom-tom. But you don't muffle drums with parades, or going back from the cemetery. At the most there were eleven or twelve men in the whole brass band. I never noticed what the people who followed the bands did because my attention was all on my music. Maybe I'd cast my eye and perhaps see something funny, but it was only a minute, and then right back to my music. In the parades they had horses and men with sashes and the like, but the music was all I was interested in.

Sometimes the groups would have several bands in a parade. Then the main band had to start first and finish last and all the other bands had to go through this leading band at the end of the parade. Of course the head band would always be the best. And it was one of the most exciting things I ever did to play music and go through another band that was playing. The main band was lined up on both sides and we had to go between them and keep playing. I remember the first time it happened. I don't remember who was drumming in the main band but I think it was Ernest Trepagnier who was beating bass drum. The snare I don't remember. But my snare was a four-inch drum, and this fellow had a six-inch snare drum. When we got going through I couldn't hear my drumming anymore so I didn't know what I was doing. And I picked up with the other drummer, who was playing six-eight in contrast to the two-four time we had been playing. I should have displaced the other fellow's drumming with concentrating on what I was doing, but that time I heard the other guy's part and not my own, and of course we were playing altogether different numbers. But it's those experiences

which make you know what music is, and it's the hard way of learning.

I played many a funeral with brass bands in New Orleans. The first time I ever heard the number *Didn't He Ramble* was in a street parade after the burial of a corpse. He had been a member of a secret society and so they hired a band to play for his funeral. He was the type of fellow who would go out and have a good time, and cheat on his wife. In other words he was the type of person who would throw a brick and hide his head. But when he came home he was a saint. And so they made this number. They claim that Buddy Bolden made it but I don't know. If the musicians found out that this was the kind of man who was being buried they would play this song. It meant a lot of things that weren't just out and spoken.

Of course we played other numbers coming back from funerals. We'd play the same popular numbers that we used to play with dance bands. And the purpose was this: As the family and people went to the graveyard to bury one of their loved ones, we'd play a funeral march. It was pretty sad, and it put a feeling of weeping in their hearts and minds and when they left there we didn't want them to hear that going home. It became a tradition to play jazzy numbers going back to make the relatives and friends cast off their sadness. And the people along the streets used to dance to the music. I used to follow those parades myself, long before I ever thought of becoming a drummer. The jazz played after New Orleans funerals didn't show any lack of respect for the person being buried. It rather showed their people that we wanted them to be happy.

On other occasions we played jazz on the streets to advertise dances and lawn parties. Private individuals used to sponsor these parties and they were held in outdoor pavilions rather than dance halls. They'd have just a tarpaulin or tent over the top to keep the night air off, and sometimes they

would have a tarpaulin stretched out on the ground for the people to dance on. Sometimes they'd dance on the natural ground. They'd smooth it off nice. And the only advertising they had would be to get the band on a wagon and put a couple of posters on the side. We would sit there and go from block to block or corner to corner, and play. Of course when the people came out to hear the band they would see the posters. I used to play on such wagons when I first started with the American Stars and later with Frankie Dusen's Eagle Band, and still later with Celestin. For a fact, all the bands used to advertise that way. We would start out about two o'clock in the afternoon and wouldn't get back till around five.

When some other outfit was also advertising and we met each other along the street in those wagons it used to make it very interesting. The guys would put the wheels together and tie them so the band that got outplayed could not run away. That made us stay right there and fight it out. And we used to draw quite a crowd of people in the street that way. We didn't call them cutting contests, but if we said that a band cut you on the street, that meant they outplayed you. And that was passed along through jokes. We talked about who got chased, or which band "fixed them guys," and that sort of talk.

I'll never forget one time when we were stopped on the streets. I was playing with Jack Carey on that occasion. I didn't belong to the band but they used to get me to play. Jack Carey played trombone, his brother Mutt, cornet, and Carey's nephew named Zeb, clarinet, and we ran across Ory's band. Quite natural the Ory band had the best of it all. Besides Ory, my brother was in that band, and Joe Oliver. Of course we didn't have a chance, but we had to stay there. When we played a number there wouldn't be much applause, but when Ory played we would hear a lot of people whistling and applauding. When we heard that, quite natural our cour-

age went down and we wanted to get away. But the wheels were tied together. It lasted an hour and a half or two hours and it was very discouraging. I wasn't so good. I was just starting and Ory's drummer, Henry Martin, was a finished musician, but those things are what made us want to become good musicians because it made us know what we had to do better.

But I improved as time went on and I left the Dusen Band to join Sonny Celestin's outfit. Sonny had heard that I was young but wanted to learn and he hired me. We played at a place called Jack Sheehan's Roadhouse. It was a cabaret style place. They'd sell setups and glasses, and people could either bring their own whiskey or buy it there. It was prohibition but they sold whiskey anyway because it was on the outskirts of New Orleans. They also had roulette wheels for gambling and some card games. We played only for dancing and there were six of us in the outfit: Celestin on trumpet; Baby Ridgeley, trombone; Zutty Singleton's uncle, Willie Bontemps, played bass and guitar; and Lorenzo Tio, clarinet. It was mostly a reading band. Only two didn't read music. And we had a girl piano player. She was a very good-looking, light-colored girl named Emma Barrett. She had big eyes; we used to call her "Eyes." She was a very thin girl but, oh my God, she could play nice piano. She played like any man.

They were all good musicians. Celestin played very sweet horn. He never was much of a jazz man on horn. He played mostly straight. Still, with everybody else jazzing and him playing straight, it sounded awfully good. Baby Ridgeley was also a very nice guy who played nice trombone. His playing wasn't rough but sweet, more like Honoré Dutrey's. Willie Bontemps was a very big fellow who weighed two hundred pounds or more. He suffered from asthma and had to use an atomizer. Lorenzo Tio was more of a Mexican type fellow. He was Creole, very tall with very straight black hair. He was a very easygoing fellow and he used to love to play. He

had a cute little joke which he liked to play on Sonny. Celestin was very sleepy; we used to say he was lazy, but he was just a sleepyhead. After playing he'd put his horn down in his lap and go to sleep. Then for a trick Tio would take some newspaper, tie it to the back of Sonny's chair, and set fire to it. One night Celestin jumped up and almost ran out of the place. He was very angry with Lorenzo and Tio had to hide from him for about half an hour until he got his temper down. It's the only time I've ever seen Celestin really mad. He was pretty sore but later he took it as a joke, too.

When I was with Celestin we played more pop numbers than when I was in the Dusen Band. We didn't call them pop numbers though, we called them classical numbers. That is, not the rowdy type, such as blues, nothing like that. The customers at Jack Sheehan's were all white and the blues would not have been appreciated. It wouldn't be any use to play them. One of the main numbers which we played was *Liza Jane*. I used to sing that and Sonny would put his horn in his lap and start clapping in time. But before he got the time he'd be going asleep. I'd have to say "Come on, Sonny!" and then he'd wake up and join in the number again. Later, after I left the band, Sonny sang the number himself and then all the fellows joined in. Before that I don't think Celestin knew he could sing.

It was at Jack Sheehan's that I worked out my shimmy beat. It was wartime, around 1918. One night a French soldier came in. When he heard the music he couldn't dance to it, but he just started to shake all over. That's the way it affected me. I saw him do it and I did it, too. The people got such a kick out of seeing me shaking like him that they all came around and watched. Then when I saw that it caused such a big sensation and brought credit to myself and my drumming, I continued it. I used to shimmy at the same time I used my press roll and a full beat. It was perfect. I slapped my left foot, the right foot was busy, and it worked very

nicely. I used it ever since that time and it became a specialty with me.

Although I didn't realize it at the time, my days of playing in New Orleans were coming to an end. Before long I joined the Fate Marable Band and played on the riverboats, and from there I went to the West Coast and Chicago with King Oliver. But it was in New Orleans that I got my start.

2. JAZZ ON THE RIVER

It was around the latter part of 1918 when Pops Foster got me the job playing on the riverboat. I had been playing with Sonny Celestin's Band and left that outfit to work on the boat. Pop also wanted to get Louis Armstrong. He figured that I could do more with Louis than he could and he asked me to get him for the band. Louis was playing with the Ory Band. So was my brother John. So I was fighting to get Louis on the boat, and my brother was fighting to make him stay with Ory. Finally, I won out. It was a big job but I made it and we had Louis with us on the boat. Louis and I stayed on the boats from the fall of 1918 until September of 1921.

The boats belonged to the Streckfus line. They had jazz bands for dancing on all their boats. At first I played on the steamer *Sidney*, working out of St. Louis in the summer, and out of New Orleans for seven winter months. After my first year on the boat they brought the steamer *St. Paul* out of dry dock. It was a much larger boat. The *Sidney* held only about eight hundred but the *St. Paul* had a capacity of thirty-five hundred. After that they used the *Sidney* in New Orleans only. I played on four boats in all: the *Sidney*, the *St. Paul*, the *J.S.* and the *Capitol*. Later they added the *President*. I was on that boat when it came out of dry dock but I didn't work on it. We would leave New Orleans around the fifteenth of May

and head up the river for St. Louis. We played in St. Louis from about the fifteenth of June until the fifteenth of September, but we also took trips out of some towns farther up the river. We went all the way up to St. Paul and stopped in Davenport, Dubuque and Keokuk, Iowa; LaCrosse, Wisconsin; and Red Wing, Minnesota, on the way.

In St. Louis they used to give colored excursions every Monday night. It was one of the most wonderful things you've ever seen carried on. The boat was packed and we got such a kick out of it because it gave us a free kind of sensation for working. We worked all the week for white people and this one night we could work for colored. It gave us an altogether different sensation because we were free to talk to people and the people could talk to us, and that's a great deal in playing music. We were less tense because it was our own people. I especially loved it because I made a big sensation with my shimmy beat. I used to shimmy and drum at the same time, shake all over. The colored people had never seen anything like that. I used to have a bunch around me backed up five or six deep; and Louis Armstrong would have a bunch five or six deep backed up around him. It was a wonderful thing, and we were the two sensational men on the boat, Louis and I.

We certainly enjoyed working on the boats and we were paid well, too. We were getting fifty dollars a week and five dollars a week bonus. That was to force us to stay on the whole season; we wouldn't receive the bonus until the season was over. We also got our room and board on the boat. The bunks were very comfortable but we stayed down in the hold. However, it was very clean and nice. The band and the roustabouts were the only colored people on board. The fourteen of us in the Marable Band all ate at a separate table. Some of the fellows thought the food was good but I didn't think so. We had mostly stews, salads, wieners and things like that. That's nothing to feed anybody. When we got to St. Louis

we preferred to board ourselves rather than stay on the boat and eat that food.

And they were pretty strict about what we did, too. After we left New Orleans to go up the river, we had nothing to do but be on the boat. We ate and slept right on the boat. Every time we got off work we went right back down in the hold and went to sleep, or did what we wanted to do at night: play cards, or shoot craps, or something. There was nobody to win money from except one another. When we went out at night there was a curfew. And if we weren't there at a certain time we didn't get on the boat. We got off work at eleven and we could leave the boat until curfew, which was about one-thirty.

The bosses demanded discipline. I remember once when I was in Keokuk, Iowa, I got into a humbug. We all piled off the boat one day and I got so drunk I couldn't see. They were using this homemade beer, they used to call it "bust-head" in Keokuk, and I came back to the boat so drunk with the stuff that I just couldn't walk up the gangplank. They tied me to a post and one of the bosses said I should have been horsewhipped. I said "Yeah? I'll bet it would be the worst horsewhipping you ever saw if you'd let me alive when you got through." They were kind of shy of me. I didn't care about anything in those days so maybe I would have done something, I don't know.

But my heart was in my music, and that was some of the sweetest music I ever played. It was a wonderful outfit. Besides the standard jazz and popular numbers, we played classical numbers and also played for ordinary singing. The Marable Band was the first big band that I worked with. We had about fourteen men. It was a pleasure to work with that bunch of men. We didn't have to work hard. Of course, we worked hard but we didn't have to. We played strictly by music. And music is not so hard if you get with a bunch that's playing together. But it's an awful strain to play jazz

with one fellow going this way and another fellow going another. That makes for hard work. It's like anything else. If you run an automobile and the gears are meshing easy you can run it pretty fast. But if the gears are meshing badly, they're going to hit each other. It's the same thing with music. Regardless of what the number is, if everybody's together, and if everybody knows his business, when the notes are joined they'll come out even. The music would sound so pretty, especially on the water. And the melophone set the band off and gave it a different tone from any other band I worked with. It was something great to hear. Everybody was so congenial, too. We had so much harmony in that band.

The leader, Fate Marable, was a very light-colored man with red hair. He was a pretty stern fellow who kept strict order. Marable had worked for Streckfus so long, and he looked so white, that people used to say he was Streckfus's son. He was the best calliope player I ever heard. I've heard them played in the circus but no one could play like that guy. He had a calliope on top of the boat which he used to play alone. Three decks down, where the band played, he had a little electric chimes, which worked just like a calliope. He played mostly piano with the band but he would use the chimes just to make the band sound a little different at times.

There were some other wonderful musicians in the riverboat band besides Fate Marable. There was Joe Howard, who was a very even-tempered, nice-going fellow. He would try to tell you everything right if he possibly could and would show us anything that he could to improve the group. But he would get angry with himself sometimes and we could see the different expressions on his face. He would never bother anybody though. He helped Louis a great deal with the mastering of musical ability.

Davey Jones, who played melophone, was another easy-

tempered fellow who didn't drink at all. His musical ability was also very high and he would show anyone all he knew. And his melophone gave the band a sound you don't often hear. He played it with the bell of the horn in his lap. Other players turned it up. The sound from the bell would come in his lap. It muffled the tone and made it sound so beautiful.

Sam Dutrey was a fine fellow but he was very high strung. However, he and I used to get along beautifully. We were close friends, just as his brother, Honoré, was my best friend in the Oliver outfit later. He also tried to get me to save some of my money.

Of course, Louis was also with us. I remember, when he first came on the boat, he didn't have a horn. And in Davenport, Iowa, Bix Beiderbecke and some of the other white musicians came on the boat to listen and talk to the different musicians. Louis told Bix he didn't have a horn, so Bix said, "Well, meet me when I go out and I'll see if I can get you a horn." And Bix took him out afterwards and helped him pick out a horn.

There's a story about Louis and some of the others buying bootleg liquor on the boat. It was during prohibition time and we were glad to get even a drink of liquor, especially good liquor. One day a fellow came on the boat with a suitcase out of which he pulled a bottle. We all had a taste of it and we asked him how much he wanted. He said "Twenty-five dollars a quart." We knew whiskey was tough to get so we all said "yes." He said he would have to come back and bring it to the dock at a certain time, and we planned a time to have it on our intermission so we could meet him. When he came during intermission we were waiting. I don't know what happened but I ducked out of it and decided I didn't want any. Then Fate borrowed the twenty-five I had put in. He and Louis had earlier paid for one quart each, so that meant the fellow got seventy-five dollars. But when we got back on the boat we found out there was nothing in the suit-

case but three bricks. Naturally, we lost all of the money and never saw the fellow again. But we had a big laugh and kidded Louis and Fate a long while about it. It was a real laugh for me, because even though my money went, I had backed out of it after I had been one of the instigators. And of course everybody knew I loved whiskey.

But with all our joking we never got away from the music and we always tried to work out new ideas. Louis was especially versatile. Once Streckfus bought some trick instruments for the different people in the band. He bought Louis a slide trumpet and me a slide whistle and different little trinkets that were to go with my drums. That's what they call traps. A snare drum isn't a trap drum. Rather traps are such things as blocks, triangles, slide whistles, horns, tambourines, cocoa blocks and things like that. In those days nobody handled these traps but the drummers. And if you couldn't handle the traps you didn't get a job. Well, Streckfus bought this slide whistle for me but I didn't even look at it. Louis did. He played it and years later he used it sometimes with the Oliver band. Joe wanted him to make a recording with it so he took the whistle along to a recording session and played it on the Oliver record of *Sobbin' Blues.*

Louis also had a lot to do with the popularizing of jazz words. He used certain expressions on the riverboats, like "Come on, you cats," and "Look out, there, Pops," and the like. These were his own ideas. I had never heard such words as "jive" and "cat" and "scat" used in New Orleans. There was one exception, however, which you don't hear now. We used to call white musicians "alligators." That was the way we'd describe them when they'd come around and we were playing something that we didn't want them to catch on to. We'd say "Watch out, there's an alligator!" But these other terms Louis had a lot to do with.

I think it was on the riverboat where Louis developed his

gravel voice. He had a cold all the time and we used to kid him around, laughing and joking. Once he took a whole course of Scott's Emulsion. It cleaned him out perfectly and then he got plenty of rest on the boat since there was no special place to go. He got rid of the cold but the voice had developed like that and he's been like that ever since.

Louis learned a lot about music from Joe Howard on the boats, and I also learned a great deal about music during that time. I knew how to spell when reading music but I didn't know how to read well and fast. We had loads of fun and had an hour and a half or two hour rehearsal almost every day, all new music. That's why we learned to be such good readers. New music every day, and the same music we rehearsed in the day we played at night. And we had to be perfect with it. There were three Streckfus brothers, and they were all musicians. I think two of them played piano and one, violin. And they made Fate demand frequent rehearsals of the band. It was wonderful for me and everyone else concerned. It made us tidy up our music, it made our eyes fast, and it made us fast on our instruments. That was the first place I learned what "time" was. They would hold a metronome on me, and a stop clock, and I wouldn't know anything about it. I had to be a very strict time keeper in those days. I used to listen to everybody in the group and try to give each one what he wanted. Nobody tried to outplay the other fellow. We all played together, and Louis was the only one who took solos in the Marable Band.

It was on the riverboat that I began using the rims instead of the woodblocks. I don't remember the number but on one that called for woodblocks I used the rims of the bass drum instead. And it sounded so pretty. The woodblock gave a loud sound, and I substituted the shells of the drums, and it sounded so soothing and soft. Sometimes I used faster beats on the rims. Then again, when it was a slow number, I'd do it in triplets. It was pretty and soft, and still it would make the

number lively. I worked out these things by myself on the boat because I knew I had to make good. That's also where I learned to be so tough on drumming. At that time I could sit down and drum a pretty long time.

On the boat I also worked out the technique of hitting the cymbal with the sticks. I worked that out around 1919. Now everybody's using it, but it came from me on the riverboat. There was a side cymbal that used to be on the drum. I took that off and then it was a straight boom, boom, boom. Of course, I still used the two cymbals on top of the bass drum. There was a regular cymbal and a Chinese cymbal. The Chinese cymbal had a different tone. We all used it in those days but Ray Bauduc's about the only one I know who uses it now.

It was about the same time that I helped cause the sock cymbals to be made. I was in St. Louis working on the steamboat and William Ludwig, the drum manufacturer, came on the boat for a ride. He was very interested in my drumming. I used to stomp my left foot, long before other drummers did, and Ludwig asked me if I could stomp my toe instead of my heel. I told him "I think so." For a fact I thought nothing of it. So he measured my foot on a piece of paper and the space where I would have it and where it would sit and he made a sock cymbal. Two cymbals were set up and a foot pedal with them. One day he brought one along for me to try. It wasn't any good, so he brought another raised up about nine inches higher. Well, I had just taken the cymbal off the bass drum because I didn't want to hear that tinny sound any more and I didn't like the sock cymbal either. I didn't like any part of them and I still don't. Now it's a big novelty for drummers. Some drummers can't drum without them. I can't drum with them.

But I made good, too, with my drumming and there's a story about my teacher Brundy which shows the progress I made. We were working on the steamer *St. Paul* and there

was another excursion boat, the *J.S.*, which was a sister to the *St. Paul*. The only difference between the two boats was that the *St. Paul* was a flat-bottomed boat and the *J.S.* was a keel-bottomed boat. After we had made such a hit in St. Louis, Streckfus wanted to get another colored band for the *J.S.* They got an outfit from New Orleans and Brundy was in it. After he had played a while, Streckfus told him, "You come over on the steamer *St. Paul* and listen to that drummer." When Brundy came on and I saw who it was, I told Streckfus, "My God, I can't do no drumming. This fellow's my teacher. He taught me how to drum." He said, "It doesn't matter if he did, you can drum better than he can." And Streckfus told him so. Brundy replied, "If my scholar can drum better than I and I've got to learn under him now, I'll quit." And he did. He quit drumming entirely and started playing clarinet from that time on. I never heard him play clarinet but I understand he played it until he was killed when hit by a car sometime later.

Of course Streckfus liked my drumming or he wouldn't have hired me. He liked the whole band. He used to use a white band out of Davenport, Iowa, every year. They were jazz bands, too, or supposed to be. They called them jazz bands. But I guess he was losing money with the white bands. Red Nichols played on the boat one time, and also Miff Mole. Some of the white musicians didn't like the idea of playing with Fate, even though he was as light as any of them. I think that's why Mr. Streckfus wanted all Negroes.

The first year we went up the river we didn't do good at all. It was pitiful. We played up the Mississippi River and I think people used to come on the boat more for curiosity than anything else. And they sat down and looked at us. They'd advertise before we got there that we were colored. So people wouldn't be disappointed. Fate Marable and his Jaz-E-Saz Band, with Louis Armstrong, Baby Dodds, and so forth down the line. It was embarrassing to have the people

stare at us but I didn't care about that. I looked at it this way: "Well, I'm doing something big or else there wouldn't be such astonishment." Often when we went to a town nobody would dance. Then when we'd go back for a second trip that same day, the boat would be packed.

Hannibal, Missouri, was a hard place. We played one trip out of there, and had an excursion for the women and children in the daytime. We had a nice load, not full capacity but a nice load. At night we had only a few, and what was there just sat down and looked at us. And do you think they started dancing? No. They just sat and stared. That was from nine o'clock until eleven o'clock. Nobody danced. We'd take an intermission, go off, come back, and they'd still look at us. And then later on the mayor or somebody ordered another trip back there. He ordered a special chartered trip. My God, you couldn't get them off the boat; the boat was packed to capacity. I think the first time it was a surprise for the people. They had never before seen Negroes on the boat. They saw Negro roustabouts but had never seen a Negro with a tie and collar on, and a white shirt, playing music. They just didn't know what to make of it. But they really liked it. They were the most dancingest people I ever found on the boat.

Sometimes the people would stand on the wharf and listen to the music. The boat was tied to the wharf and we'd play there for about a half hour before we'd ship out. That was partly to attract people. We also had dancing on the boat while it was docked. Lots of people would feel more secure when it was standing than when it was running. And the people on the boat were not the rowdy kind. We were lucky to have just nice people. If they weren't nice before they got on the boat, they were gentlemen and ladies while on it. They had some pretty tough guys around like bouncers to keep order. No liquor was served and there was no gambling, excepting raffles for candy.

The band played strictly for dancing. We played all the

standards of the day and we used to make the classics into dance tunes. There was a sign up "Requests filled," and the people could ask for special numbers. We played eleven or twelve numbers, and every one of them had an encore to it. Then we had only a fifteen-minute intermission, and started all over again. We worked pretty hard with that band.

But we didn't play many blues on the boat. The white people didn't go for blues like they do now. They try them now but they don't know the blues. They think any slow number is a blue type. That's wrong. Blues is blues. In New Orleans we used to play the blues and the very lowest type of dancers used to love such things. They were played very slow and fellows and their girl friends would stand almost still and just make movements. It was rowdy music, and yet it wasn't rowdy in a way, either. They often expressed some tragedy, just like *Frankie and Johnny*. *Frankie and Johnny* was one of this style of blues they used to sing a long time ago. It was about some woman and her man. Another one was *Ace in the Hole*. Those are really sporting numbers, which were played in the sporting houses, or when sporting people would get together.

The blues are something like a man drinking. If he drinks to extreme it's because there's something on his mind. And it's so deeply on his mind that the only cure he thinks he can find is a bottle. The blues is something of that sort. It may come from trouble in one's home, with his people, his wife or something, domestic troubles perhaps. That's what blues are. Something like this song *Laugh, Clown, Laugh*. Regardless of how heavy your heart may be you can't give in to that and make the people know you're sorry. You've got to make them laugh. That's the same with the blues.

In New Orleans we played the blues in very slow tempo. Blues today aren't played as slow as in the old days. It used to be so draggy. I've heard white people say at a dance, "We don't want any of that dead march music. That sounds like

a funeral march." Well, they didn't know any different. The colored people understood. The only way the colored people could express themselves was through the blues, that perhaps nobody understood but themselves. That's the way they expresed themselves to themselves. It's very unnatural for some people, especially white people. In a way a white man has always had his chance to do anything he wanted to. A Negro's chances are always limited.

The Negro had something to be blue for. He could go only so far and then he was cut out, regardless of how good he was. Quite naturally, when he thinks about it, that he's in a limited place in life, why he gets blue about it. Then he sits down, and he'll either whistle to himself, or pat his foot, or do something. And maybe he sings some song that's very slow, and he takes his time to express himself in his way. When another guy comes along, he hears the tune and says, "What is this guy doing?" and asks, "What's the name of that tune?" The fellow answers, "Oh, just blues." And the second guy might ask, "Why blue?" and he answers, "Well, I got the blues, that's all it is." It's getting rid of your feelings within yourself. And it is expressed with a song. And it must have the feeling with it. If an individual doesn't have the feeling with the blues it doesn't mean anything.

I've heard some wonderful blues singers. I've listened to Ma Rainey sing the blues time and time again. And she would sing blues with words that coped with the situation. Like Mamie Smith. She had a voice and sang words that made you feel very sad. Bessie Smith was the same way. I think Bessie had one of the silver tones of blues singers. That's my opinion. Mamie Smith's voice was between contralto and alto, and Bessie Smith had a real clear alto voice. Ma Rainey had a baritone voice. Between the three singers, for my part, I would rather hear Bessie.

I didn't hear blues singers in St. Louis but I heard practically all the bands that were around there at the time we

were on the riverboats. I used to like St. Louis very much. Dewey Jackson had a band there and so did Charlie Creath. And there was a place called Jazzland where they had a band. It was a rendezvous for most of the colored traveling acts that came from other places like Chicago. Sometimes, but very seldom, we would sit in with the St. Louis bands. Everybody that was working on the boat was known there, and Louis and I used to travel together most of the time. And when we'd sit in there, we'd break it up. Naturally, I knew how to work with Louis and Louis knew how to work with me, so it turned out very nice. I met this drummer Red Muse, who was supposed to be very sensational, in St. Louis. It was a place called the Chauffeur's Club, a night club joined to a hotel. I was with Fate Marable and everybody was hollering when we came in the place. His drumming was very sensational, very good. He'd throw up sticks and things like that. I was actually afraid to sit down there. But one night Fate played piano, and Louis played trumpet and I played drums, and we broke up the place. So I had no more bother with Muse after that. Before that I was scared to death. But I shimmied when I drummed and that took the eyes of the people. It was something different and made a very good impression.

My drumming improved a great deal on the boats but eventually Louis and I left because of a misunderstanding which we had with the bosses. Streckfus wanted us to play differently and he told Marable so. Well Fate Marable had been with Streckfus so long that anything Streckfus asked for he'd tell us to do, even if it meant breaking our necks. The Streckfuses were musicians and they knew what they wanted and they wanted us to beat a different time than we had been using. Some of the older people on the boat couldn't dance to our music and Streckfus wanted to introduce what he called "toddle time." It was really two-four time but he wanted four beats to the measure. It's what they are doing

today. To me, four beats was all wrong. It has a tendency to speed up the music. But for the older people it was easier since instead of dancing to a step, they would just bounce around. Louis was also to play differently from what he had been used to. And I just couldn't do this toddle time on my drums. I felt that it would change me so much from my way of drumming and from what I had learned and had been doing all those many years. Louis couldn't do what they wanted him to do either. Well, we were the stars on the boat and we felt that if we were the stars, why monkey with us. We had already made a reputation with our music and the people were satisfied. So finally Louis and I left the boat together after handing in written resignations. That was about the first of September, 1921.

I often think what a shame it was that the riverboat band never recorded. If they had, people would really have heard something pretty. It was just like a clock. Even if we got off one or two beats, somebody knew it and told us about it. It made me very sad to leave the Marable outfit. I had been attached to the band for three years and that was a long time to be with a special bunch of people. But I soon joined another group in which I was just as happy—the King Oliver Band.

MARK SCHORER: On Lady Chatterley's Lover

[BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: *In October 1926, after his final visit to England, D. H. Lawrence began work on his last novel, his "English novel,"* Lady Chatterley's Lover, *at the Villa Mirenda, Scandicci, Florence, and he completed the first version in February 1927. After an expedition to a number of Etruscan tombs in April, he wrote a second version which was completed before summer. Late in 1927 and during January of 1928, after a long and desperate siege of illness, he wrote the third and present version. With the help of Mrs. Aldous Huxley, a typescript was prepared for private publication under the imprint of the Florentine bookseller, Giuseppe Orioli; and on March 9, 1928, Lawrence and Orioli delivered the work to a printer who could not read English and some of whose assistants could not read at all. By March 15, Lawrence was sending out subscription forms (one thousand copies were to be printed and sold at two pounds each) to friends in England, France, and the United States. He began reading proofs in early April and the last were finished on May 24; the book was in press at the very end of that month. Finished books were being mailed out by the end of the first week in July 1928, and before the end of the year, Orioli had published a second edition of two hundred copies, printed "on common paper, to be sold at a guinea." The novel was immediately and frequently pirated in the United States and France, and to bring this theft to an end, Lawrence published a popular edition ("The Author's Unabridged Popular Edition") in Paris in May 1929. This edition carries an introductory essay called "My Skirmish with Jolly Roger," which Lawrence subsequently lengthened and enriched in the essay called "A Propos of* Lady Chatterley's Lover," *posthumously published in June 1930. Two years after Lawrence's death in 1930, an abridged version was issued by Alfred A. Knopf in New York and by Martin Secker in London, and this version has been widely distributed in inexpensive reprints since. It is not, of*

course, the novel as Lawrence wrote it, and cannot be so judged. The complete version has been published in English in many continental countries and in translation in most. In 1944, the Dial Press published Lawrence's first manuscript version under the title The First Lady Chatterley. *The second manscript version has never been published except in an Italian translation issued by Mondadori in Milan. The third and final version has never been published in Great Britain, and never legally in the United States. The three manuscripts, beautiful in themselves and beautifully preserved, are in the possession of Angelo Ravagli in Taos, New Mexico, and it was only through his great kindness and that of the late Frieda Lawrence Ravagli that the present essay was made possible.*—MARK SCHORER.]

Lady Chatterley's Lover came into being under the umbrella pines of an Italian wood where Lawrence liked to sit writing beside a spring of San Eusebio, before the cave where the saint had lived. The air was golden, wild flowers embroidered the ground, nightingales sang to him. He wrote: "Civilized society is insane." He had put himself at last as far as possible "outside the made world" in order to deliver this last judgment upon it, and yet, writing his condemnation of industrial society in the peace of this Tuscan *pinèta,* he was also closing a circle.

As is known to all who read, D. H. Lawrence was born, the son of a coal miner and a schoolteacher, in the village of Eastwood in the English midlands of Nottinghamshire where they edge on Derbyshire. What the life of that countryside was like at the end of the last and the beginning of the present century, and what Lawrence's youth, lived in that countryside, was like, is best told in his novel *Sons and Lovers.* The background of that novel, as of his first, *The White Peacock,* is a

slow cultural convulsion about to reach its end, a convulsion in which the ancient pastoralism of the yeoman way of life yields to the new mechanization of the industrial way of life, and in which, incidentally, a lovely landscape yields itself to an iron horror. What was lovely and peaceful in that older life and landscape was Lawrence's peculiar treasure; what was ugly and new, his special anathema. Just before his death (and very shortly after he had published *Lady Chatterley's Lover*), as with a gasp of nearly desperate nostalgia, he wrote to a boyhood friend, J. D. Chambers, the younger brother of that girl "Miriam" who is at the center of the conflict in *Sons and Lovers.*

Dear David,—

I hardly recognized you as J. D.—and you must be a man now, instead of a thin little lad with very fair hair. Ugh, what a gap in time! it makes me feel scared.

Whatever I forget, I shall never forget the Haggs—I loved it so. I loved to come to you all, it really was a new life began in me there. The water-pippin by the door—those maiden-blush roses that Flower would lean over and eat and Trip floundering round.—And stewed figs for tea in winter, and in August green stewed apples. Do you still have them? Tell your mother I never forget, no matter where life carries us.—And does she still blush if somebody comes and finds her in a dirty white apron? Or doesn't she wear work-aprons any more? Oh, I'd love to be nineteen again, and coming up through the Warren and catching the first glimpse of the buildings. Then I'd sit on the sofa under the window, and we'd crowd round the little table to tea, in that tiny little kitchen I was so at home in.

Son' tempi passati, cari miei! quanto cari, non saprete mai!—I could never tell you in English how much it all meant to me, how I still feel about it.

If there is anything I can ever do for you, do tell me.—Because whatever else I am, I am somewhere still the same Bert who rushed with such joy to the Haggs.

This recollection is in sharp contrast to a fresher one that appears in the second version of *Lady Chatterley*. There, late in the novel, Lawrence has his lovers go to the Eastwood country; they meet in the church at Hucknall where "the pinch of dust that was Byron's heart" (Byron, "that fat lad"!)

is enshrined, and they survey the old Lawrence landscape—Haggs Farm now deserted, Felley Mill still and abandoned, everything "dead as Nineveh," all life sacrificed to "coal and iron." This bitterly personal scene disappears from the final version of the novel, but here we have a comparable episode in the long motor trip that Constance Chatterley makes through Derbyshire:

> The car ploughed uphill through the long squalid straggle of Tevershall, the blackened brick dwellings, the black slate roofs glistening their sharp edges, the mud black with coal-dust, the pavements wet and black. It was as if dismalness had soaked through and through everything. The utter negation of natural beauty, the utter negation of the gladness of life, the utter absence of the instinct for shapely beauty which every bird and beast has, the utter death of the human intuitive faculty was appalling. The stacks of soap in the grocers' shops, the rhubarb and lemons in the greengrocers'! The awful hats in the milliners'! All went by ugly, ugly, followed by the plaster-and-gilt horror of the cinema with its wet picture announcements. "A Woman's Love!" . . . Tevershall! That was Tevershall! Merrie England! Shakespeare's England! No, but the England of to-day, as Connie had realized since she had come to live in it. It was producing a new race of mankind, over-conscious in the money and social and political side, on the spontaneous, intuitive side dead, but dead. Half-corpses, all of them: but with a terrible insistent consciousness in the other half. There was something uncanny and underground about it all. It was an underworld. . . . This is history. One England blots out another.

Constance Chatterley's drive, we may assume, duplicates in fact and feeling a drive through the same countryside that Lawrence made in 1925. "Been motoring all over my well-known Derbyshire," he wrote mildly enough to Martin Secker. "But I can't look at the body of my past, the spirit seems to have flown." The Lawrences had been living above Taos and in Oaxaca; now they had paused in England on their way to Italy again. For a few months they settled at Spotorno (where Angelo Ravagli, the "Tenente" of Lawrence's letters, was their landlord). Lawrence was weary and felt no incentive to write a long book, but he did, during this period, write in its

rough form the novelette, *The Virgin and the Gypsy,* which returns him to the English setting and is in some ways a thematic anticipation of *Lady Chatterley* as well. Then they moved south to Florence and the Villa Mirenda. In the summer of 1926 they made one more visit to England, and late in that year, after the composition of *Lady Chatterley* was well under way, Lawrence wrote to Rolf Gardiner about this visit. In this letter he tells Gardiner in explicit detail of the familiar landmarks in Eastwood and its environs—the houses in which he lived as a boy, Haggs Farm and Felley Mill and other places that had figured prominently in the first half dozen novels and in so many of his stories. "That's the country of my heart," he writes; but painfully, for he concludes as follows:

> I was at my sister's in September, and we drove round—I saw the miners—and pickets—and policemen—it was like a spear through one's heart. I tell you, we'd better buck up and do something for the England to come, for they've pushed the spear through the side of *my* England.

What he could do for "the England to come" was to write *Lady Chatterley,* and we are reminded of a letter from as far back as 1913:

> Pray to your gods for me that *Sons and Lovers* shall succeed. People should begin to take me seriously now. And I do so break my heart over England when I read the *New Machiavelli.* And I am so sure that only through a readjustment between men and women, and a making free and healthy of this sex, will she get out of her present atrophy. Oh, Lord, and if I don't "subdue my art to a metaphysic," as somebody very beautifully said of Hardy, I do write because I want folk—English folk—to alter, and have more sense.

Fourteen years after his death, his widow said of Lawrence and *Lady Chatterley* and the English people, "he spoke out of them and for them, there in Tuscany, where the different culture of another race gave the impetus to his work."

Between the cottage on Walker Street in Eastwood, or

Haggs Farm outside it, and the Villa Mirenda outside Florence, lay a long history. In that history, three items loom large: Lawrence's marriage to Frieda von Richthofen, the first World War, and travels all over the globe. His marriage is one of the most exploited subjects in our memoir literature, and all one need say of it here is that, whatever stresses it may have undergone, it had more of blessedness, and that without that blessedness, the lyrical portions of *Lady Chatterley,* which comprise a great hymn to true marriage, could not have been written. Lawrence's personal experiences in the war are the subject of the chapter called "The Nightmare" in the novel, *Kangaroo,* and the atmosphere of the war and of a war-made world hangs over all his works from 1916 on but is most prominent in the quality of that social world that threatens the lyrical world of *Lady Chatterley,* for Lawrence felt as early as 1916 what we all feel today, "the violence of the nightmare released now into the general air." The travels (southern and central Europe, the Far East, Australia, the United States and Mexico, Europe again) not only provided him with the series of settings through which his novels make their march and so lead him to their end at the Villa Mirenda, but also provided him with images of utopia (always smashed) that would give him the community relationship that he sometimes desperately felt he needed. It was only when he gave up that hope, and the programs that his novels sometimes developed out of that hope, that he could have come to rest in *Lady Chatterley,* where there is no program at all, only the inspired plea that the human being become what he already is, that is, human. The journey from the humanity and the inhumanity of of his youth, to his discovery at the end of the essentially human as it could be defined in drama against that background—this is another circle that his last novel closes.

There were times in Lawrence's career when the whole beautiful line of it, as it was finally drawn, threatened to blow up completely. After the purely autobiographical novel, *Sons*

and Lovers, Lawrence wrote his two most complex works, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love.* These were novels that attempted to seize directly on the psychic realities. They end with regenerate heroes who have experienced visions of human felicity for which they can find no place either in this world or in the realistic convention of the novel. Then begins a period for which bitter, surely, is a mild word—bitter, galled, the withers wrung. And yet, in this period, where Lawrence tries to bring his characters into vital social relationships, we are at the center of the most fascinating and alarming elements in Lawrence, the artist.

Aaron's Rod (the novel that, in its first paragraph, announces the end of the war, the violence released now into the general air) was published in 1922, the year of Mussolini's *coup d'etat; Kangaroo,* in 1923; *The Plumed Serpant,* in January 1926. Unable to see any but negative virtues (that is, vices) in democracy, which seemed to Lawrence a means of freeing the individual to mediocrity and a numbed anxiety only, he was still fairly desperate to find some means of satisfying what he himself called his "societal impulse" and of making his novels end positively in this world. So he turned to undemocratic ideas, a part of the violence released now; and in these three novels, in three different ways, tried them out to see if they would work either for the novel or for life. They did not. This is the imaginative test of theoretical abstraction, and Lawrence's greatness of mind shows in the necessity he felt to reject the abstraction when it would not work for the imagination. The first two of these novels are fragmentary, implosive structures because the author, while he cannot prove the abstraction right, is unwilling to let his story prove it wrong and so lets the story jar to a stop in negation. The third is a unified work because the lives of the characters, in the actualities of the plot, prove that the abstraction is merely abstract, that is, wrong, and the novel ends in its rejection.

Aaron's Rod presents Lawrence in the character of Lilly, who assures Aaron Sisson that he will not find himself until he finds a greater man to whom he can submit his partial individuality; but in the end, Lilly can produce no such leader, not even himself. In *Kangaroo,* Lawrence puts himself in Aaron's position, as the man who seeks the leader; but, confronted by the alternative of the socialist, Struthers, and the fascist, Kangaroo, the Lawrentian hero departs for America, where he hopes to find a more plausible choice. Then, in *The Plumed Serpent,* Lawrence tries still another device: he transforms his seeker into a woman, a jaded European who has severed her connections with her own social past and seeks fulfillment in Mexico through the leadership of two men who are trying to institutionalize a primitive religion which is not in the least unlike Lawrence's own religion of "the dark gods"; but it will not work. As the two leaders fail her, so she fails them, and discovers, with Lawrence, that there are two kinds of power: the power to dominate others, and the power to fulfill oneself. "The leader-cum-follower relationship is a bore," Lawrence wrote then, in a letter. "And the new relationship will be some sort of tenderness, sensitive, between men and men, and between men and women." *Lady Chatterley's Lover,* the last novel, was first to be called *Tenderness.*

This is the final Lawrence, the Lawrence who kicked out, although with a dragging reluctance, the hypothetical fragments that he had tried to shore against the world's ruin and his own, and who was determined to attempt still to be free in the actualities of human relationship. He was an artist who had gone through a purgatorial period that sought escapes from freedom, and then settled with small content and no complacency into the paradise that knows what freedom is, or at least where it begins. This is the paradise that is allowed to human life when human beings can recognize that after all the sweat for something else, for something either more or less, the value of life exists in the act of living; that living

means full living, or the life of the full and not the partial self, the self that realizes its powers rather than the self that seeks power or submits to it. And this is, after all, the beginning of the true democracy, as it is of the true marriage, because it is total integration, and therefore makes possible the only creative spontaneity, even though that be in isolation, in an Italian wood.

At the Villa Mirenda—a great square block of whitish-gray stone that stands, like the typical farm villa of Tuscany, alone on its hill, its clusters of cypresses thrusting up blackly green against the blue, its fields and vineyards falling away from it in all directions, and the matchstick dwellings of the *contadini* scattered here and there among the fields—here, the Lawrences saw few people. Chiefly they had the peasants and themselves. One reason that they took the place was because this was "a region of *no* foreigners." Lawrence knew quite well what he was facing ("Have you built your ship of death, oh, have you?") and he was trying to face it. ". . . people don't mean much to me, especially casuals; them I'd rather be without," he wrote; and, "the Florence society is no menace." He did not want what he could have, and he could not have what he felt that he needed. He took his isolation, then, with small content and no complacency. In July of 1926 he wrote to Rolf Gardiner (a British proto-fascist) as follows:

> I believe we are mutually a bit scared. I of weird movements, and you of me. I don't know why. But if you are in London even for a couple of days after the 30th, do come and see us, and we can talk a little, nervously. No, I shall ask you questions like a doctor of a patient he knows nothing about.
>
> But I should like to come to Yorkshire, I should like even to try to dance a sword-dance with iron-stone miners above Whitby. I should love to be connected with something, with some few people, in something. As far as anything *matters*, I have always been very much alone, and regretted it. But I can't belong to clubs, or societies, or Freemasons, or any other damn thing. So if there is, with you, an activity I *can* belong to, I shall thank my stars. But, of course, I shall be wary beyond words, of committing myself.

Everything needs a beginning, though—and I shall be very glad to abandon my rather meaningless isolation, and join in with some few other men, if I can. If only, in the dirty solution of this world, some new little crystal will begin to form.

And even after he had finished the second version of *Lady Chatterley* (and among the truths that this novel most forcibly urges is the meaning and the necessity of isolation), he could still write as follows to Dr. Trigant Burrow:

I suffer badly from being so cut off. But what is one to do? One can't link up with the social unconscious. At times, one is *forced* to be essentially a hermit. I don't want to be. But anything else is either a personal tussle, or a money tussle; sickening: except, of course, just for ordinary acquaintance, which remains acquaintance. One has no real human relations—that is so devastating.

Better to have no social relationships at all than to have them and pretend that they are real! So he wrote disgustedly to Huxley of Beethoven, whose letters he was reading, "always in love with somebody when he wasn't really, and wanting contacts when he didn't really—part of the crucifixion into isolated individuality—*poveri noi.*" Every future holds only one final fact, and what Lawrence loved about Villa Mirenda was that it served to school him in that ultimate isolation.

I never know what people mean when they complain of loneliness.
To be alone is one of life's greatest delights, thinking one's own thoughts,
doing one's own little jobs, seeing the world beyond
and feeling oneself uninterrupted in the rooted connection with the centre of all things.

In those barely furnished rooms, in that quiet country landscape, the rooted connection might yet be found.

There is nothing to save, now all is lost,
but a tiny core of stillness in the heart
like the eye of a violet.

Violets grew there in profusion, and Lawrence was dying among them. He was ill much of the time at the Mirenda, and his was an illness that could only be alleviated, not cured. If illness and the image of a black ship lay under his isolation, they also affected in a curious way Lawrence's attitude toward his work. During the months at Spotorno, after the English visit of 1925, he wrote only a few stories, his longest effort being that piece about an English girl called *The Virgin and the Gypsy,* which is preparatory to *Lady Chatterley.* At Villa Mirenda, the lethargic indifference, a weary kind of rest after all the high-strung battles, grew in him. He wrote his British publisher:

> In the real summer, I always lose interest in literature and publications. The *cicadas* rattle away all day in the trees, the girls sing, cutting the corn with sickles, the sheaves of wheat lie all afternoon like people dead asleep in the heat. *E più non si frega.* I don't work, except at an occasional scrap of an article. I don't feel much like doing a book, of any sort. Why do any more books? There are so many, and such a small demand for what there are. So why add to the burden, and waste one's vitality over it.

But news of the General Strike in England renewed the images of iron and of an "underground humanity" in his mind.

> I feel bad about that strike. Italian papers say: "The government will maintain an iron resistance." Since the war, I've no belief in iron resistances. Flesh and blood and a bit of wisdom can do quite enough resisting and a bit of adjusting into the bargain—and with iron one only hurts oneself and everybody. Damn iron!

Then, once more, with the visit to England in the summer of 1926, mere images of iron became the monstrous realities of the senses, and soon after his return to Italy, he writes, "I've nearly done my novel."

2

The story of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is among the simplest that Lawrence devised: Constance Chatterley, the frustrated wife of an aristocratic mine owner who has been wounded in the war and left paralyzed and impotent, is drawn to his gamekeeper, the misanthropic son of a miner, becomes pregnant by him, and hopes at the end of the book to be able to divorce her husband and leave her class for a life with the other man. Through all his career Lawrence had been concerned with the general theme of this book—the violation or the fulfillment of individuality in relationship—and many times he had handled the theme in the concrete terms here presented where fulfillment involves the crossing either of class or cultural lines, and often of both, where violation results from resisting this necessity. The familiar construction, then, is of a woman in a relatively superior social situation who is drawn to an "outsider" (a man of lower social rank or a foreigner) and either resists her impulse or yields to it. The two possibilities are embodied, of course, and respectively, in the situation into which Lawrence was born and in the situation into which he married. Inevitably, it became a favorite situation of his fiction.

Among the short stories, one might mention five as clear illustrations: one of his juvenile works, *A Fragment of Stained Glass,* deals with a medieval serf who flees his bondage with a miller's daughter; in *The Daughters of the Vicar,* one daughter chooses to defy her family in order to marry a miner; in *The Shades of Spring,* a Miriam-like girl reveals to her old, poetic lover that a gamekeeper has taken his place; in *Mother and Daughter,* the daughter chooses to upset her mother's values and her own by committing the absurdity of going off with an Armenian known to the mother as "the Turkish Delight"; in *None of That,* an enormously wealthy daughter

of the jazz age invites an involvement (to her destruction) with a Mexican bullfighter.

Among the novelettes, one might again mention five. In *The Fox,* a constrictive relationship between two girls is shattered by the intrusion of a farmer-soldier and his passion for one of them; in *The Ladybird,* an aristocratic Englishwoman yields to a mysterious central European, Dionys Psanek; in *St. Mawr,* Mrs. Witt and her daughter Lou are attracted by a Welsh groom and a half-breed Navajo; in *The Princess,* a New England virgin wishes to yield to a Mexican guide and discovers only too late that she cannot truly yield; in *The Virgin and the Gypsy,* an English virgin yields to a gypsy.

From the ten novels, we can once more choose five, although the situation is omnipresent. There is *Lady Chatterley's Lover* itself. In *Sons and Lovers,* the parental situation is not only an obvious example but the archetype. In *The Lost Girl,* a middle-class English girl leaves the comforts (and depredations) of home for a rigorous life with an Italian peasant. In *The Plumed Serpent,* Kate Forrester, a refined European, yields (temporarily) to the intellectual leadership of one Mexican and the physical leadership of another. And in the very first novel, *The White Peacock,* the situation not only presents itself in the Lettie-George relationship, but a gamekeeper, Annable, appears briefly but volubly as the earliest version of Parkin-Mellors, the gamekeeper of the last novel.

Such a catalogue as this takes two risks: it suggests a limited imaginative range, and it seems to denigrate the subject by a tone of frivolity. Neither risk is serious, for the theme itself, however baldly one may state the situations that embody it, is pushed into every area that concerns us most seriously in this century. *Lady Chatterley's Lover,* like everything that Lawrence wrote, is an affirmation of life values as against the mechanization of human nature. This, his general

subject matter, may be broken down into two major themes; the relation of men and women, and the relation of men and machines. In the works as they are written, the two are one, and his most subtle and penetrating perception, the knowledge that social and psychological conflicts are identical, is so firmly integrated in the structure of his books that it is almost foolhardy to speak of his having two themes when in fact he had one vision. But a vision has both a background and a foreground, and one may say, perhaps without distortion, that the men and machines relationship is the background, the man and woman relationship, the foreground. This division does not mean that the first determines the second, for it would be just as true to say that the second determines the first. They are, in fact, inextricable. We might say that one provides the scene, and the other, the drama enacted on that scene.

Who *was* Annable? One must remind oneself of the British novel as it was in the year 1911 to recognize what an extraordinary figure he is, standing there so clearly from the beginning, in that first novel, written when Lawrence was a very young man. Whether he had some prototype in actuality we will probably never know, and it is of no importance that we should know; certainly he had none in fiction. What is important is simply to observe that he was uniquely *there*—there from the beginning in Lawrence's imagination as the figure who asserts that modern civilized society is insane, and who without compromise rejects it. Nothing that one might say of ideas of primitivism and of the natural man as these had been used in the writing of the two preceding centuries would in any way reduce his uniqueness.

> He was a man of one idea:—that all civilisation was the painted fungus of rottenness. He hated any sign of culture. I won his respect one afternoon when he found me trespassing in the woods because I was watching some maggots at work in a dead rabbit. That led us to a discussion of life. He was a thorough materialist—he scorned

religion and all mysticism. He spent his days sleeping, making intricate traps for weasels and men, putting together a gun, or doing some amateur forestry, cutting down timber, splitting it in logs for use in the hall, and planting young trees. When he thought, he reflected on the decay of mankind—the decline of the human race into folly and weakness and rottenness. "Be a good animal, true to your animal instinct," was his motto. With all this, he was fundamentally very unhappy—and he made me also wretched.

Annable's difficulty is that he is not only an animal (as his name is not quite that word), but also a human being with a civilized experience behind him. The son of a prosperous father, he had been enrolled at Cambridge, had taken orders and served as curate to a fashionable rector, and had married (unhappily, in the end) a lady; yet now he lives in brutish squalor, amid a swarm of soiled children and a slatternly, illiterate woman, and strives not to lift his mind above these chosen circumstances. He does not manage to survive his choice. Yet he serves his function in providing a kind of choral emphasis in a novel that is concerned with the thinning out of human relationship amid a general deterioration of life. He serves no less to emphasize Lawrence's success in developing the character and situation of his last gamekeeper. His success with this figure is Lawrence's vindication of his crude attempt with Annable, just as it is the payment of his long-standing debt to the humanity of his own father. This is not so much a matter of psychological as it is of aesthetic maturity; Lawrence had found precisely the way that he wished to speak. For if *Lady Chatterley's Lover* concludes a long thematic history, it concludes no less a history of forms.

Lawrence was, of course, three things: he was a man in search of a life; he was a prophet in search of a revelation; and he was an artist in search of a convention. The first formed the second, and the second created the problems of the third, but it is only the third, finally—or the third as containing the others—that we can with much profit consider in the name either of criticism or of thought.

In a recent enthusiastic book on Lawrence by an Anglican priest who writes under the name of Father Tiverton, we are shown that the spirit of Lawrence's work was not at all inimical to much that is central in Christian thought, and also that this spirit makes him the kind of artist that he is. And how simply Father Tiverton puts it! "He reached the point in imaginative being at which the preacher and the poet coincide, since the poem is the sermon." The *whole* poem, of course, or the *whole* story, or the *whole* novel, not any set of extractable words or scenes that exist only as a portion of those wholes. This primary axiom of all reading and all criticism applies nowhere more drastically than to *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

To reach the point where the preacher and the poet coincide *formally* was not a simple matter. We have already observed something of Lawrence's intellectual progress, how in novel after novel, the imaginative test qualifies the theoretical conviction. Thus Lawrence's mind constantly moved as each novel shrugged off its predecessor, at the same time that his techniques moved through a wide range of fascinating experimentation (still almost entirely unexamined by criticism) in his attempt to accommodate what was theoretically dear to him to the dearer forms of fiction. In both the broadest and the most special sense, Lawrence is first of all the artist: he gives primacy to the "living tissue" of imaginative experience, and his craft is constantly moving and moving always on a dynamic base.

All this is to say nothing at all about those sporadic bursts of "genius" ("A great genius, but no artist," runs the cliché) that even the unfriendliest critics grant, those "fitful and profound insights" that even Mr. Eliot, for example, finds it possible to allow; it is only to say that in the one important way that a man is an artist, Lawrence was an artist: that he knew where his real life was lived. Once this obvious matter can be established (and Father Tiverton went far in doing just that),

we can begin to analyze the spurts of genius and their place in the whole art, or even, conceivably, to describe the constant artist.

Lawrence, the constant artist, made constant demands on the forms of fiction that had not been made in the past. "It is the way our sympathy flows and recoils that really determines our lives," he wrote in the famous ninth chapter of *Lady Chatterley's Lover.*

> And here lies the vast importance of the novel, properly handled. It can inform and lead into new places the flow of our sympathetic consciousness, and it can lead our sympathy away in recoil from things gone dead. Therefore, the novel, properly handled, can reveal the most secret places of life; for it is in the *passional* secret places of life above all, that the tide of sensitive awareness needs to ebb and flow, cleansing and freshening.

Among the "things gone dead" (and it is only one) is the conventionalized, the calcified ethic of Christianity, and it was Lawrence's belief that the human consciousness was capable of regeneration if only it could be led away from the rubble into "new places." ". . . for wide masses of people," John Lehmann wrote in 1947, in a plea for a renewal of "the world of love,"

> the Christian symbols as they have known them have ceased to be significant, and their desperate need is to find new symbols—even if those symbols should lead us back to a rediscovery of the central meaning of Christianity, restored through the discarding of outworn and corrupted images, and irrelevant accretions of fact.

Although Mr. Lehmann himself found the mass of Lawrence's symbols inadequate to this end, one can argue—and so Father Tiverton argued—that this attempt was precisely Lawrence's. His wish was to take the sacraments out of their merely institutional bindings and to reassert the sacramental nature of life itself.

> The old Church knew best the enduring needs of man, beyond the spasmodic needs of today and yesterday. . . . For centuries the mass

of people lived in the rhythm, under the Church. And it is down in the mass that the roots of religion are eternal. When the mass of a people loses the religious rhythm, that people is dead, without hope. But Protestantism came and gave a great blow to the religious and ritualistic rhythm of the year, in human life. Non-conformity *almost* finished the deed. Now you have a poor, blind, disconnected people with nothing but politics and bank-holidays to satisfy the eternal human need of living in ritual adjustment to the cosmos in its revolutions. . . . Mankind has got to get back to the rhythm of the cosmos, and the permanence of marriage.

"I am a profoundly religious man," Lawrence once said of himself, and when Father Tiverton comes to the concluding point in his discussion where he wishes to state the central fact about Lawrence's view and his art, he writes: "I should claim that one of the great virtues of Lawrence was his sense of the ISness rather than the OUGHTness of religion . . . he believed in his dark gods not because they 'worked,' but because they were true."

But how, in the realistic tradition of the British novel, was the artist to communicate the "ISness of religion"? Of the first three novels, where the content is suited to the realistic convention, *Sons and Lovers* is successful even though it is in that work that Lawrence discovers that what he wants his work to communicate is a more essential reality than "that hard, violent style full of sensation and presentation" (as Lawrence himself described it) was capable. *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* are his extended attempt at a form that will accomplish this end. The first begins as a traditional family chronicle and ends in a Blakean vision; the second consolidates the visionary and the hallucinatory effects of the first, and they dominate the whole. Neither is a novel in any traditional sense, not even a "psychological novel." They are psychic dramas in which primary human impulses rather than human personalities struggle and embrace, and they end with heroes who have made a journey of the soul and whose regeneration puts them beyond the conditions of that social

world out of which the novel as we have known it has always come and in which it has always been rooted. In *Aaron's Rod* and *Kangaroo* the strenuous formal attempt is relinquished; these are rather rough chronicles of real journeys in which the soul's journey is *discussed* but in which no attempt is made to embody its destination in the drama. In *The Plumed Serpent,* an extremely ambitious work, the myth of the soul's journey coalesces happily with the primitive Mexican myth that the heroes are attempting to revitalize in Mexican political life and that makes up the bulk of the story; it ends with the European heroine's conclusion that the Mexican myth may be good for the Mexicans but that it is of small use to her, and she lapses back into the condition of her social world, saying, *" But I can fool them so they shan't find out."* She will take from them what is of use to her, for as long as may be.

In many of his short stories and in his short novels, Lawrence managed to maintain a realistic framework within which rich symbolic modulations that far transcend realism could be beautifully contained. In the shorter fiction, too, he could break into pure symbolic forms, as in *The Woman Who Rode Away,* or into splendid fable, as in *The Man Who Died.* But even as he managed more and more successfully to handle action that in itself was ritualistic and prose that was liturgical, the convention of the realistic novel could not be made wholly to yield. The progress from the first through the third version of *Lady Chatterley* is the history of an effort to make the events at once maximumly plausible in realistic terms and maximumly meaningful in psychic terms. The result in the third version is a novel in a solid and sustained social context, with a clear and happily developed plot, in which the characters function fully and the author allows them to speak for themselves; at the same time it is a novel in which everything is symbolic, in which "every bush burns," and which in itself finally forms one great symbol, so that one can easily re-

member it as one remembers a picture. In the background of this picture black machinery looms cruelly against a darkening sky; in the foreground, hemmed in and yet separate, stands a green wood; in the wood, two naked human beings dance.

3

The first *Lady Chatterley* is a relatively short, dark, and above all rough sketch written under the pall of recently experienced English gloom; the second, written after the Etruscan adventure, is much longer and leaps out of the dreariness of the first, with a strong infusion of lyric feeling and natural vitality that must derive from Lawrence's experience of the brilliantly sensuous tomb paintings at Tarquinia and elsewhere; the third, written after a hard and alarming illness, is about the same length as the second, but there is a sharpening of intellectual issues and a deepening of pathos. These are the large general changes, and if we add to them the fact that in each version as it succeeds an earlier, the treatment of the sexual act becomes more and more explicit, a development as necessary to the achievement of the four qualities just listed as it was to the full dramatization of Lawrence's theme, we have encompassed the major changes in tone and feeling. At the other end of the scale of revision are thousands of alterations in technical detail, and a systematic analysis of these changes would tell us a great deal about Lawrence the writer, but the place and time for such an analysis is a scholarly monograph that could best be published when all three texts of the novel are available to interested readers. Between these two extremes of revisionary method are a variety of changes in dramatic structure, many of which have been observed by E. W. Tedlock, Jr., in an appendix to his *The Frieda Lawrence Collection of D. H. Lawrence Manuscripts* (1948). It is in the interest of the present account to observe a few of these.

Lawrence's first problem in revision seems to have been to tell his story in such a way as to achieve maximum plausibility within the terms of his own aspiration: he had to make the love of the lady and the gamekeeper convincing, and he had also to give their love a chance for survival in the world as he saw it. If we follow the alterations in the character of the keeper, in the character of Constance, and finally, in the nature of the resolutions, we will be able to see how he achieved his end.

In all three versions, the gamekeeper (called Parkin in the first two, Mellors in the third) is a man of about forty, a miner's son who has misanthropically withdrawn from the industrial world into work in the wood. In the first and second versions, he is of medium height, with reddish-brown eyes and a shaggy mustache; in the third, he is taller, with blue eyes. In the first version he is physically strong; in the second, not so strong; in the third, sometimes rather frail. The Parkin of the first version speaks only in the vernacular; the second uses the Derbyshire dialect in scenes of affection and the king's English when he wishes; Mellors speaks more or less like the second Parkin but is capable of much more conceptual language. The Parkin of the first version has least motivation for his misanthropy but is the most violent in asserting it. He delights in trapping poachers and getting summonses for them; to Mellors, this is an unpleasant part of his work. Where Parkin is positively churlish with Constance, Mellors is ironical and mildly derisive. The first Parkin's motivation lies in a smashed marriage with a brutish woman; the second Parkin's motivation lies in the same marriage, but with a background of an awkward sexual trauma that unfits him for any other woman and yet does not fit her for him. In Mellors, the sexual background is amplified but the traumatic experience disappears: he has had love affairs with young women drawn exactly on the models of Miriam and the Helena of Lawrence's second and third novels—romantic, "spiritual" women who

offended his manhood, and from these he had turned to the "common" girl, Bertha, whom he married, but who revealed at once a ferocious sexual will under the force of which the marriage passed swiftly into brutish deterioration. From this marriage, Mellors escaped into the world, and the world of gentlemen: he had become an officer's aide in India. Now, in his cottage, he has books that he can read and talk about, and he is Constance's equal in all but birth. The original Parkin is something of a clown as well as a boor: "The skirts of his big coat flapped, his brown dog ran at his heels. He was once more going to take the world by the nose. . . . He strode with a grand sort of stride, baggy coat-tails flapping. The son of man goes forth to war! She smiled to herself grimly." The second Parkin still has "a rather sticking-out brown moustache," but "His bearing had a military archness and resistance that was natural to him." Mellors has not only the military background itself, but, along with "a certain look of frailty," natural gentility, and when Constance sees him in town, "tall and slender, and so different, in a formal suit of thin dark cloth," she reflects that "he could go anywhere. He had a native breeding which was really much nicer than the cut-to-pattern class thing."

In Constance Chatterley, the changes are perhaps less drastic, but they are no less important to her motivation. In the first version, she has had a certain continental experience but it has hardly made her worldly; in the second version, she has had a continental education; in the third version, she has not only had a continental education but also a series of casual, "intellectual" love affairs before her marriage. She is still "a ruddy, country-looking girl with soft brown hair and a sturdy body, and slow movements, full of unused energy," but she is also a woman whose experience has equipped her to take the full measure of her world. Her marriage ruined by Clifford's physical incapacity, she has, in her third figuration, a casual postmarital affair (and is encouraged in this conduct by her friends, her father, even her husband). In the third

version, Lawrence introduces the character of Michaelis, a successful, trivial playwright, to put Constance at the very center of the full emptiness of this social-intellectual world. This motivation is of first importance, for it places Mellors and Constance in precisely the same situation: an experienced man and woman, both disillusioned with their experience, both capable of a better experience. With the minimization of the class barrier between Connie and Mellors and the amplification of their similar sexual defeat, Lawrence achieves the psychological realism of the final version.

If they are ready for one another, they still face the problem of finding a world that is ready for them. As only a glance at the variation in the three endings will show, Lawrence had solved this problem only in part by the alterations that we have already observed. In the first version, where class barriers are strongest, and where Lawrence is still hoping for some social role for his characters, Parkin ends as a worker in a Sheffield steel mill and as the secretary of the local branch of the Communist party. Just before the end, after Constance is shown in an impossible scene in a worker's home, she and Parkin quarrel, and the likelihood of their finding any way out is small. In the final scene, she hopes to become his wife, simply his wife, living in his terms, sharing his interests, politics included; but our hope for her is small. In the second version, Parkin is no longer a political man and the Sheffield mills are an abomination to him; he plans to leave them for farm work. He is perhaps a little less unwilling to spend some of Connie's money in order to find a life for themselves, if she is so determined. The novel ends with his promising to "come to Italy" in her wake, when she needs him. But here Lawrence has tried to write out the class barrier by fiat. While Constance is visiting on the Continent, she has this revelation:

> Class is an anachronism. It finished in 1914. Nothing remains but a vast proletariat, including kings, aristocrats, squires, millionaires and

working-people, men and women alike. And then a few individuals who have not yet been proletarianised. . . .

It was a great relief to her that that vague, yet very profound class-mistrust which had laid like a negating serpent at the bottom of her soul, was now gone. Vitally, organically, in the old organic sense of society, there were no more classes. That organic system had collapsed. So she need not have any class-mistrust of Parkin, and he need have none of her.

This discovery presumably frees them to live in the world as it is, on their terms. The end of the second version is very explicitly uninterested in any retreat to the colonies. It is the world or nothing, this time. "To Connie, the wood where she had known Parkin in the spring had become the image of another world," but the implication is that she can make *that* world bloom in this one, probably in Italy. On this subject, Lawrence had taken his personal stand, and interested readers should examine his *Autobiographical Sketch,* written at this time and published posthumously in *Assorted Articles.* There he writes:

Class makes a gulf, across which all the best human flow is lost. It is not exactly the triumph of the middle classes that has made the deadness, but the triumph of the middle-class *thing*. . . . the middle class is broad and shallow and passionless. Quite passionless. At the best they substitute affection, which is the great middle-class positive emotion. . . . Yet I find, here in Italy, for example, that I live in a certain silent contact with the peasants who work the land of this villa. I am not intimate with them . . . and they are not working for me; I am not their *padrone*. Yet it is they, really, who form my *ambiente*. . . . I don't expect them to make any millennium here on earth, neither now nor in the future. But I want to live near them, because their life still flows.

But Connie and Mellors are not Frieda and D. H. Lawrence, and Lawrence has the dramatic tact to recognize as much in the third version. While the entire implication (underlined by the *rapport* that develops between Mellors and Connie's father) is that class is an anachronism, and that the moment we can make better assumptions about what we are in the potential

human facts, this will be the first of many anachronisms to vanish from the actual social facts, Lawrence wisely allows the matter to remain in the realm of implication rather than forcing it to solve his dramatic problem. Again, with the question of marriage as it is *versus* marriage as it should be, the second version is as explicit as this:

> So it must be: a voyage apart, in the same direction. Grapple the two vessels together, lash them side by side, and the first storm will smash them to pieces. This is marriage, in the bad weather of modern civilisation. But leave the two vessels apart, to make their voyage to the same port, each according to its own skill and power, and an unseen life connects them, a magnetism which cannot be forced. And that is marriage as it will be, when this is broken down.

In the third version, the dramatic presentation of a true marriage is permitted to speak for itself, and the fact that this true marriage must exist in a wasteland leaves the end of the third version in some uncertainty, which is supremely right. The whole seems to slow down into a *decrescendo* as it begins to breathe out an uneasiness that is aesthetically fine, among Lawrence's really great effects. Political affirmations (and some impossible scenes) vanish, both the earliest assertions of class war and the middle assertions of the absence of class, and the novel ends with a long letter from Mellors to Constance, written from a farm where he is working, as both characters await their divorces and Connie awaits her child. Mellors hopes to find a farm of his own, perhaps in Canada, where they can make their life; but he does not hope for more, and he is hardly bold in the hope he has.

> . . . what I live for now is for you and me to live together. I'm frightened, really. I feel the devil in the air, and he'll try to get us. Or not the devil, Mammon: which I think, after all, is only the mass-will of people, wanting money and hating life. Anyhow I feel great grasping white hands in the air, wanting to get hold of the throat of anybody who tries to live, live beyond money, and squeeze the life out. There's a bad time coming! If things go on as they are, there's nothing lies in the future but death and destruction, for these indus-

trial masses. I feel my inside turn to water sometimes, and there you are, going to have a child by me. But never mind. All the bad times that ever have been, haven't been able to blow the crocus out: not even the love of women. So they won't be able to blow out my wanting you, nor the little glow there is between you and me. We'll be together next year. And though I'm frightened, I believe in your being with me. A man has to fend and fettle for the best, and then trust in something beyond himself. You can't insure against the future, except by really believing in the best bit of you, and the power beyond it. So I believe in the little flame between us. For me now, it's the only thing in the world. I've got no friends, not inward friends. Only you.

Earlier in the novel, we encounter this exchange between the lovers:

"I would like to have all the rest of the world disappear," she said, "and live with you here."

"It won't disappear," he said.

They went almost in silence through the lovely wood. But they were together in a world of their own.

In the end, Lawrence permits them to meet the world as it is with the only armor that they have: the courage of their own tenderness. But the reader remembers, perhaps, for his comfort and theirs, the echoing promise of Clifford himself, meant with such an ironic difference and delivered in the cadences of the later T. S. Eliot, that "every parting means a meeting elsewhere. And every meeting is a new bondage."

If Lawrence's first problem in revision was to achieve maximum plausibility within the terms of his aspiration, his second problem was to achieve maximum meaning through the amplification of his symbols. If the first problem involved him primarily in the solid realities of a class situation, the second involved him in the modulations of psychic reality. The basic contrast between life-affirming and life-denying values, between "tenderness" and the "insentient iron world" is the sole subject of Lawrence's symbolic amplifications, and nearly any line of revision, no matter how minor, that we chose to follow through the three versions of his novel would demonstrate the

swelling connotative richness with which this contrast is presented.

Perhaps the most obvious development over the three texts is Lawrence's increase in descriptions of both the mechanical world and the wood on the Chatterley estate, for this juxtaposition in the setting of the novel is the first symbolic form of the basic thematic contrast of the novel. It is developed until the new consciousness of the lovers is itself like a wood in flower, and the shrinking consciousness of Clifford is itself like a machine in gear.

> She was like a forest, like the dark interlacing of the oak wood, humming inaudibly with myriad unfolding buds. Meanwhile the birds of desire were asleep in the vast interlaced intricacy of her body.
>
> But Clifford's voice went on, clapping and gurgling with unusual sounds.

Hardly less obvious is Lawrence's development of two kinds of scene—the intimate sexual scenes between the lovers in the wood and the intellectual and abstract discussions (including discussions of sex) inside Wragby Hall. This development is important not only in that it dramatizes the two ways of life but more especially in that it presents symbolically two ways of conceiving life. Incidentally, one might observe that in his amplification of the Wragby scenes, Lawrence also benefits the dramatic force of his novel, for insofar as the character of Clifford undergoes changes through these revisions, the physical barrier between him and his wife, which was the only real barrier in the first version, takes on relative unimportance as the temperamental and intellectual barrier between them becomes much more important. Again, in this whole growth, one might observe that changes in characterization are likewise in symbolic support of the basic thematic contrast of the book, for as Constance, in the third version, grows into the mature woman with a consciousness like a flowering wood, so Clifford, at the very height of his industrial

efficiency, sags into a horrible infantilism, and the whole relationship of Clifford and Mrs. Bolton becomes an enormously subtle trope of class relations. Finally, one might view the alterations in Lawrence's language, from text to text, as integral to his symbolic intentions, and the contrast in language between the two kinds of scene as absolutely primary to the whole aesthetic purpose of the work. In the Hall, language is over-intellectualized, abstract, polite, and cynical; in the wood, it is intuitive, concrete, coarse, and earthy. "We have no language for the feelings," Lawrence wrote in his essay, *The Novel and the Feelings,* "because our feelings do not even exist for us." In a novel which attempts to direct the consciousness to its source in the feelings, Lawrence necessarily employed the only language that English convention provides.

Whatever one may feel as to Lawrence's success, one cannot for a moment question the purity of his intention. Lawrence, who is perhaps the only important puritan in his generation, is eloquent and complete in his remarks on this novel in *A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover.* To those remarks one might add only a few observations that he made in other places. His purpose, he always asserted, was "to make the sex relation valid and precious, not shameful," and sex, he said, "means the whole of the relationship between man and woman." Given his intention, he could quite rightly say that "anybody who calls my novel a dirty sexual novel is a liar," and, "It'll infuriate *mean* people; but it will surely soothe decent ones."

With one friend, Lady Ottoline Morrell, who was apparently disturbed by the novel, he debated in calm protest:

> About *Lady C.*—you mustn't think I advocate perpetual sex. Far from it. Nothing nauseates me more than perpetual sex in and out of season. But I want, with *Lady C.,* to make an *adjustment in consciousness* to the basic physical realities. . . . God forbid that I should be taken as urging loose sex activity. There is a brief time

for sex, and a long time when sex is out of place. But when it is out of place as an activity there still should be the large and quiet space in the consciousness where it lives quiescent. Old people can have a lovely quiescent sort of sex, like apples, leaving the young quite free for *their* sort.

The basic physical realities have, as any thoughtful reading of this novel will reveal, enormous reverberations throughout the whole of life. The urgency for the modern world no less than the precise descriptive relevance of Lawrence's vision is constantly brought home to us by psychologists. Eric Fromm, for example, in that notable book, *Escape from Freedom*, writes:

> The word "power" has a twofold meaning. One is the possession of power over somebody, the ability to dominate him; the other meaning is the possession of power to do something, to be able, to be potent. The latter meaning has nothing to do with domination; it expresses mastery in a sense of ability. If we speak of powerlessness we have this meaning in mind; we do not think of a person who is not able to dominate others, but of a person who is not able to do what he wants. Thus power can mean one of two things, *domination* or *potency*. Far from being identical, these two qualities are mutually exclusive. Impotence, using the term not only with regard to the sexual sphere but to all spheres of human potentialities, results in the sadistic striving for domination; to the extent to which an individual is potent, that is, able to realize his potentialities on the basis of freedom and integrity of his self, he does not need to dominate and is lacking the lust for power. Power, in the sense of domination, is the perversion of potency, just as sexual sadism is the perversion of sexual love.

In the second version of *Lady Chatterley*, Lawrence, in the poetic terms of his novel, made the same distinction when he spoke of the two "energies"—"the frictional, seething, resistant, explosive, blind sort" and "the other, forest energy, that was still and softly powerful, with tender, frail bud-tips and finger-ends full of awareness."

The pathos of Lawrence's novel arises from the tragedy of modern society. What is tragic is that we cannot feel our tragedy. We have slowly grown into a confusion of these

terms, the two forms of power, and, in confusing them, we have left almost no room for the free creative functions of the man or woman who, lucky soul, possesses "integrity of self." The force of his novel probably lies in the degree of intensity with which his indictment of the world and the consequent solitude of his lovers suggest such larger meanings. Certainly it is these meanings that make these characters, in Edmund Wilson's word, "heroic," and that give them the epic quality that was felt by no less a poet than Yeats. "These two lovers," he wrote to his friend, Mrs. Shakespear—

> These two lovers the gamekeeper and his employer's wife each separated from their class by their love and by fate are poignant in their loneliness; the coarse language of the one accepted by both becomes a forlorn poetry, uniting their solitudes, something ancient humble and terrible.

Ancient, humble, and terrible. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is all of those; but it is also this: triumphant. Lawrence sings in his novel, like Stephen Spender in a short poem of twenty years later, our first and final hymn.

> Through man's love and woman's love
> Moons and tides move
> Which fuse those islands, lying face to face.
> Mixing in naked passion,
> Those who naked new life fashion
> Are themselves reborn in naked grace.

Acknowledgment is made to these publishers for their kind permission to quote from the works of D. H. Lawrence: to Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., for quotation from "Autobiographical Sketch," in *The Later D. H. Lawrence;* to Twayne Publishers for quotation from *A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover,* in *Sex, Literature and Censorship;* and to The Viking Press, Inc., for excerpts from *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence* and *Last Poems.*

SAMUEL BECKETT: Echo's Bones

ENUEG I

Exeo in a spasm
tired of my darling's red sputum
from the Portobello Private Nursing Home
its secret things
and toil to the crest of the surge of the steep perilous
bridge
and lapse down blankly under the scream of the
hoarding
round the bright stiff banner of the hoarding
into a black west
throttled with clouds.

Above the mansions the algum-trees
the mountains
my skull sullenly
clot of anger
skewered aloft strangled in the cang of the wind
bites like a dog against its chastisement.

I trundle along rapidly now on my ruined feet
flush with the livid canal;
at Parnell Bridge a dying barge
carrying a cargo of nails and timber

rocks itself softly in the foaming cloister of the lock;
on the far bank a gang of down and outs would seem
to be mending a beam.

Then for miles only wind
and the weals creeping alongside on the water
and the world opening up to the south
across a travesty of champaign to the mountains
and the stillborn evening turning a filthy green
manuring the night fungus
and the mind annulled
wrecked in wind.

I splashed past a little wearish old man,
Democritus,
scuttling along between a crutch and a stick,
his stump caught up horribly, like a claw, under his
breech,
smoking.
Then because a field on the left went up in a sudden
blaze
of shouting and urgent whistling and scarlet and blue
ganzies
I stopped and climbed the bank to see the game.
A child fidgeting at the gate called up:
"Would we be let in Mister?"
"Certainly" I said "you would."
But, afraid, he set off down the road.
"Well" I called after him "why wouldn't you go on in?"
"Oh" he said, knowingly,
"I was in that field before and I got put out."
So on,
derelict,
as from a bush of gorse on fire in the mountain after
dark,

or, in Sumatra, the jungle hymen,
the still flagrant rafflesia.

Next:
a lamentable family of grey verminous hens,
perishing out in the sunk field,
trembling, half asleep, against the closed door of a shed,
with no means of roosting.

The great mushy toadstool,
green-black,
oozing up after me,
soaking up the tattered sky like an ink of pestilence,
in my skull the wind going fetid,
the water...

Next:
on the hill down from the Fox and Geese into Chapelizod
a small malevolent goat, exiled on the road,
remotely pucking the gate of his field;
the Isolde Stores a great perturbation of sweaty heroes,
in their Sunday best,
come hastening down for a pint of nepenthe or moly
or half and half
from watching the hurlers above in Kilmainham.

Blotches of doomed yellow in the pit of the Liffey;
the fingers of the ladders hooked over the parapet,
soliciting;
a slush of vigilant gulls in the grey spew of the sewer.

Ah the banner
the banner of meat bleeding
on the silk of the seas and the arctic flowers
that do not exist.

ENUEG II

world world world world
and the face grave
cloud against the evening

de morituris nihil nisi

and the face crumbling shyly
too late to darken the sky
blushing away into the evening
shuddering away like a gaffe

veronica mundi
veronica munda
give us a wipe for the love of Jesus

sweating like Judas
tired of dying
tired of policemen
feet in marmalade
perspiring profusely
heart in marmalade
smoke more fruit
the old heart the old heart
breaking outside congress
doch I assure thee
lying on O'Connell Bridge
goggling at the tulips of the evening
the green tulips
shining round the corner like an anthrax
shining on Guinness's barges

the overtone the face
too late to brighten the sky
doch doch I assure thee

SANIES I

all the livelong way this day of sweet showers from Portrane on the seashore
Donabate sad swans of Turvey Swords
pounding along in three ratios like a sonata
like a Ritter with pommelled scrotum atra cura on the step
Botticelli from the fork down pestling the transmission
tires bleeding voiding zeep the highway
all heaven in the sphincter
the sphincter

müüüüüüüde now
potwalloping now through the promenaders
this trusty all-steel this super-real
bound for home like a good boy
where I was born with a pop with the green of the larches
ah to be back in the caul now with no trusts
no fingers no spoilt love
belting along in the meantime clutching the bike
the billows of the nubile the cere wrack
pot-valiant caulless waisted in rags hatless
for mamma papa chicken and ham
warm Grave too say the word
happy days snap the stem shed a tear
this day Spy Wedsday seven pentades past
oh the larches the pain drawn like a cork

the glans he took the day off up hill and down dale
with a ponderous fawn from the Liverpool London and Globe
back the shadows lengthen the sycomores are sobbing
to roly-poly oh to me a spanking boy
buckets of fizz childbed is thirsty work
for the midwife he is gory
for the proud parent he washes down a gob of gladness
for footsore Achates also he pants his pleasure
sparkling beestings for me
tired now hair ebbing gums ebbing ebbing home
good as gold now in the prime after a brief prodigality
yea and suave
suave urbane beyond good and evil
biding my time without rancour you may take your oath
distraught half-crooked courting the sneers of these fauns these smart nymphs
clipped like a pederast as to one trouser-end
sucking in my bloated lantern behind a Wild Woodbine
cinched to death in a filthy slicker
flinging the proud Swift forward breasting the swell of Stürmers
I see main verb at last
her whom alone in the accusative
I have dismounted to love
gliding towards me dauntless nautch-girl on the face of the waters
dauntless daughter of desires in the old black and flamingo
get along with you now take the six the seven the eight or the little single-decker
take a bus for all I care walk cadge a lift
home to the cob of your web in Holles Street
and let the tiger go on smiling
in our hearts that funds ways home

SANIES II

there was a happy land
the American Bar
in Rue Mouffetard
there were red eggs there
I have a dirty I say henorrhoids
coming from the bath
the steam the delight the sherbet
the chagrin of the old skinnymalinks
slouching happy body
loose in my stinking old suit
sailing slouching up to Puvis the gauntlet of tulips
lash lash me with yaller tulips I will let down
my stinking old trousers
my love she sewed up the pockets alive the live-oh she did she said that was better
spotless then within the brown rags gliding
frescoward free up the fjord of dyed eggs and thongbells
I disappear don't you know into the local
the mackerel are at billiards there they are crying the scores
the Barfrau makes a big impression with her mighty bottom
Dante and blissful Beatrice are there
prior to Vita Nuova
the balls splash no luck comrade
Gracieuse is there Belle-Belle down the drain

booted Percinet with his cobalt jowl
they are necking gobble-gobble
suck is not suck that alters
lo Alighieri has got off au revoir to all that
I break down quite in a titter of despite
hark
upon the saloon a terrible hush
a shiver convulses Madame de la Motte
it courses it peals down her collops
the great bottom foams into stillness
quick quick the cavaletto supplejacks for mumbo-jumbo
vivas puellas mortui incurrrrrsant boves
oh subito subito ere she recover the cang bamboo for bastinado
a bitter moon fessade à la mode
oh Becky spare me I have done thee no wrong spare me damn thee
spare me good Becky
call off thine adders Becky I will compensate thee in full
Lord have mercy upon
Christ have mercy upon us

Lord have mercy upon us

SERENA I

without the grand old British Museum
Thales and the Aretino
on the bosom of the Regent's Park the phlox
crackles under the thunder
scarlet beauty in our world dead fish adrift
all things full of gods
pressed down and bleeding
a weaver-bird is tangerine the harpy is past caring
the condor likewise in his mangy boa
they stare out across monkey-hill the elephants
Ireland
the light creeps down their old home canyon
sucks me aloof to that old reliable
the burning btm of George the drill
ah across the way a adder
broaches her rat
white as snow
in her dazzling oven strom of peristalsis
limae labor

ah father father that art in heaven

I find me takıng the Crystal Palace
for the Blessed Isles from Primrose Hill
alas I must be that kind of person
hence in Ken Wood who shall find me

my breath held in the midst of thickets
none but the most quarried lovers

I surprise me moved by the many a funnel hinged
for the obeisance to Tower Bridge
the viper's curtsy to and from the City
till in the dusk a lighter
blind with pride
tosses aside the scarf of the bascules
then in the grey hold of the ambulance
throbbing on the brink ebb of sighs
then I hug me below among the canaille
until a guttersnipe blast his cernèd eyes
demanding 'ave I done with the Mirror
I stump off in a fearful rage under Married Men's Quarters
Bloody Tower
and afar off at all speed screw me up Wren's giant bully
and curse the day caged panting on the platform
under the flaring urn
I was not born Defoe

but in Ken Wood
who shall find me

my brother the fly
the common housefly

sidling out of darkness into light
fastens on his place in the sun
whets his six legs
revels in his planes his poisers
it is the autumn of his life
he could not serve typhoid and mammon

SERENA II

this clonic earth

see-saw she is blurred in sleep
she is fat half dead the rest is free-wheeling
part the black shag the pelt
is ashen woad
snarl and howl in the wood wake all the birds
hound the harlots out of the ferns
this damfool twilight threshing in the brake
bleating to be bloodied
this crapulent hush
tear its heart out

in her dreams she trembles again
way back in the dark old days panting
in the claws of the Pins in the stress of her hour
the bag writhes she thinks she is dying
the light fails it is time to lie down
Clew Bay vat of xanthic flowers
Croagh Patrick waned Hindu to spite a pilgrim
she is ready she has lain down above all the islands of glory
straining now this Sabbath evening of garlands
with a yo-heave-ho of able-bodied swans
out from the doomed land their reefs of tresses
in a hag she drops her young

the whales in Blacksod Bay are dancing
the asphodels come running the flags after
she thinks she is dying she is ashamed

she took me up on to a watershed
whence like the rubrics of a childhood
behold Meath shining through a chink in the hills
posses of larches there is no going back on
a rout of tracks and streams fleeing to the sea
kindergartens of steeples and then the harbour
like a woman making to cover her breasts
and left me

with whatever trust of panic we went out
with so much shall we return
there shall be no loss of panic between a man and his dog
bitch though he be

sodden packet of Churchman
muzzling the cairn
it is worse than dream
the light randy slut can't be easy
this clonic earth
all these phantoms shuddering out of focus
it is useless to close the eyes
all the chords of the earth broken like a woman pianist's
the toads abroad again on their rounds
sidling up to their snares
the fairy-tales of Meath ended
so say your prayers now and go to bed
your prayers before the lamps start to sing behind the
larches
here at these knees of stone
then to bye-bye on the bones

SERENA III

fix this pothook of beauty on this palette
you never know it might be final

or leave her she is paradise and then
plush hymens on your eyeballs

or on Butt Bridge blush for shame
the mixed declension of those mammae
cock up thy moon thine and thine only
up up up to the star of evening
swoon upon the arch-gasometer
on Misery Hill brand-new carnation
swoon upon the little purple
house of prayer
something heart of Mary
the Bull and Pool Beg that will never meet
not in this world

whereas dart away through the cavorting scapes
bucket o'er Victoria Bridge that's the idea
slow down slink down the Ringsend Road
Irishtown Sandymount puzzle find the Hell Fire
the Merrion Flats scored with a thrillion sigmas
Jesus Christ Son of God Saviour His Finger
girls taken strippin that's the idea
on the Bootersgrad breakwind and water
the tide making the dun gulls in a panic
the sands quicken in your hot heart
hide yourself not in the Rock keep on the move
keep on the move

THE VULTURE

dragging his hunger through the sky
of my skull shell of sky and earth

stooping to the prone who must
soon take up their life and walk

mocked by a tissue that may not serve
till hunger earth and sky be offal

DA TAGTE ES

redeem the surrogate goodbyes
the sheet astream in your hand
who have no more for the land
and the glass unmisted above your eyes

ECHO'S BONES

asylum under my tread all this day
their muffled revels as the flesh falls
breaking without fear or favour wind
the gantelope of sense and nonsense run
taken by the maggots for what they are

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Editors:
BARNEY ROSSET
DONALD ALLEN

Circulation and Business Manager:
FRED JORDAN

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